DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 068 972 CS 200 222

AUTHOR	Berger, Allen; Smith, Blanche Hope
TITLE	Measure for Measure. Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1972-1973.
INSTITUTION	National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Ill.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	123p.; Tenth Report of the Committee on Classroom Practices
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Ill. 61801 (Stock No. 00876, $1.75 member, $1.95 non-member)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$6.58
DESCRIPTORS	College Curriculum; Composition (Literary); *Course Evaluation; Educational Accountability; Elementary Education; *English Instruction; *Evaluation; Evaluation Methods; Intelligence Tests; *Measurement; Secondary Education; Self Evaluation; Speech Evaluation; *Student Evaluation; Teacher Evaluation; Universities

ABSTRACT

The 1972-1973 issue of "Classroom Practices in Teaching English" focuses on the topic of the evaluation of student performance. The 42 articles and statements describe ways to measure reading, writing, and speaking. The writers are teachers in elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. About half of them are identified with English teaching and the remainder more generally with education. The writers focus on large and small groups and individuals; they discuss the average, gifted, and slow students. Some also discuss the evaluation of teachers. The writers also try to clarify tests, measurement, evaluation, grading and reporting, and research and development. Some articles are concerned with performance contracting and educational accountability. An appendix of NCTE position statements relating to evaluation is also included. (Author/DI)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Classroom Practices in Teaching English 1972-1973

Tenth Report of the Committee on Classroom Practices

ED 068972

Allen Berger and
Blanche Hope Smith,
Cochairmen

National Council of
Teachers of English

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English: Allen Berger, University of Alberta, and Blanche Hope Smith, Highland Park School, Richmond, Virginia, Cochairmen; Ouida H. Clapp, Buffalo Public Schools, New York; Norman Nathan, Florida Atlantic University; Virginia M. Obrig, Greenwich High School, Connecticut; Clara A. Pederson, University of North Dakota; Samira Rafla, Northview Elementary School, Point Claire, Quebec; Evelyn Gott Eurack, Long Lots Junior High School, Westport, Connecticut, ex officio. *Consultant Readers for This Manuscript*: Joan Catmull, State Department of Public Instruction, Wyoming; James Gaither, John Marshall High School, Indianapolis; Dorothy C. Olson, Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska. *NCTE Committee on Publications*: Robert F. Hogan, NCTE Executive Secretary, Chairman; Blyden Jackson, University of North Carolina; Bette J. Peltola, University of Wisconsin; Robert E. Palazzi, Burlingame High School, California; Paul O'Dea, NCTE Director of Publications, ex officio. *Editorial Services*: Duncan Streeter, NCTE Headquarters. *Cover Design*: Kirk George Panikis, NCTE Headquarters.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 72-86328
ISBN 0-8141-0087-6
NCTE Stock Number 00876

Copyright © by the National Council of Teachers of English.
All Rights Reserved.
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801
Printed in the United States of America

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
National Council of Teachers of English
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

2

CONTENTS

Preface	vii	*Allen Berger and Blanche Hope Smith*
Introduction	1	*Allen Berger*
The Self-Weighting Examination	7	*R. Glenn Martin*
Exploring the Grading Process with Students	11	*Richard Adler*
Giving Students Voice	16	*Anne H. Adams and R. Baird Shuman*
Criterion-Referenced Grading in English	17	*Karen Kirk and Sister Jean Dummer*
Measurement, Testing, and Evaluation	20	*Fred M. Smith and Sam Adams*
Contracting with Students	21	*Ellen Woodbridge*
Student Contracts for Reading and Writing	23	*A. Ann Guscio*
On Writing	26	*Norman C. Najimy*
Involving Student Tutors in Teaching Writing to Disadvantaged Students	27	*George Held*
Grading Compositions	30	*William B. Stone*
The Small-Group Approach to Writing	32	*Julie Thompson Klein*
Understanding the Evaluation	35	*Barbara Sussman*
I Am No Longer a Grader of Papers	36	*Bertrand F. Richards*
Evaluation by Classmates	37	*Alan M. McLeod*
Diagnostic Testing in the Classroom	38	*Irene W. Hanson*
How to Construct and Administer a Group Informal Reading Inventory	41	*Carol K. Winkley*
IQ Testing	44	*Marilyn Gratton*
The Hand Test	45	*Joanne Olson*
Stanley	47	*Blanche Hope Smith*
Grading Children Humanely	52	*Edward J. Weber and Betty J. Weber*
Measurement and Reinforcement	53	*Fred M. Smith and Sam Adams*

Making and Evaluating Literary Scrapbooks	54	*Julia M. Gottesman*
Teaching and Grading the Gifted	56	*Ernest R. House*
Evaluating Student Poetry in Multimedia Presentations	58	*Charles McLain*
Making a Collage of *The Jungle*	59	*Helen Arlene Kozicki*
Tape-Recorded Evaluations	60	*Dennis J. Hannan*
Combining Writing with Agronomy	61	*Dixie S. Jackson and A. W. Burger*
Can We Really Measure Comprehension?	65	*J. Jaap Tuinman*
Normal Distribution	69	*J. C. Powell*
Space and Body-English: Keys to Speech Evaluation	70	*Charles R. Duke*
Evaluating Seating Arrangements in the English Classroom	75	*Paul A. Eschholz and Alfred F. Rosa*
Grading and Reporting	80	*Fred M. Smith and Sam Adams*
Evaluating Student Composition	84	*David B. Jacobson*
Research and Development	85	*C. M. Lindvall*
How to Write and Evaluate Multiple-Choice Questions	87	*Robert J. Starr*
Show of Excellence	89	*John Warnock*
Should English Teachers Use Multiple-Choice Tests?	90	*Barbara A. Welch*
Clearly Stated Affective Goals	91	*Joseph L. Daly*
Students Write Their Own Questions for Essays	92	*Betty Barbara Sipe*
Individualized Final Exams	93	*Albert H. Koppenhaver*
Evaluation in Conference	96	*Carl W. King*
English Course Evaluation	97	*Victor A. Doyno*
The Teacher's Ego, or, What Should Be Done About Student Evaluation	99	*Winifred L. Frazer*
Appendix of NCTE Position Statements Relating to Evaluation	103	

PREFACE

The selection of *evaluation* as the special focus of this issue of *Classroom Practices in Teaching English* grew out of interests and concerns expressed by teachers attending the open meeting of the Committee on Classroom Practices in Teaching English held during the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Las Vegas, November, 1971.

Notices requesting the submission of manuscripts for consideration were placed in the March, 1972 issues of *Elementary English*, *English Journal*, and *College English*, as well as in the journals of many Council-affiliated organizations. Many journals tangential to the field of English also included the invitation. By mid-April, exactly 140 manuscripts had been submitted from thirty-one states, the District of Columbia, and two provinces.

These manuscripts were evaluated by committee members Ouida Clapp, Norman Nathan, Virginia Obrig, Clara Pederson, Samira Rafla, and the cochairmen.

The committee selected for publication thirty of these manuscripts plus brief statements culled from twelve other manuscripts. The writers of these articles and statements represent twenty-two states and two provinces; they work in elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. Approximately half of them are identified with the field of English teaching and the remainder more generally with education.

We hope that you enjoy reading the following pages of *Measure for Measure*, the tenth issue of *Classroom Practices in Teaching English*.

A.B. and B.H.S.
1 June 1972

Allen Berger

INTRODUCTION

From the time of the Babylonian *Talmud* through Shakespeare to the present there has been an interest in measurement. In the words of the *Talmud*:

> In the measure in which a man measures is he measured.

In Shakespeare's words:

> Measure for measure must be answered.
>
> *Henry VI*

> Like doth quit like, and measure still for measure.
>
> *Measure for Measure*

Meanings of words change, of course, and Shakespeare's "measure" is closely related to what we now think of as "retribution." Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the number of times that he used certain words in his plays.

According to John Bartlett's *Concordance to Shakespeare*, he used *measure* on eighty-eight different occasions. He used *test* on only four. Once was in *Measure for Measure*: "Let there be some more test made of my metal." Another time was in *The Tempest*: "Thou has strangely stood the test." In *Hamlet*: "Bring me to the test, and I the matter will reword." And in *Othello*: "To vouch this, is no proof, Without more wider and more overt test."

While he used the word *behavior* on thirty-four occasions, he never once used the word *objective*. And while he referred to *education* nine times in his plays, he never used (in its current form) the word *accountability*.

Like Shakespeare, the writers of the following articles reflect the current interest in measurement (although not one is concerned with retribution). They describe ways to measure reading, writing, and speaking. The writers focus on large groups and small groups and individuals; they attend to the average, the gifted, the slow—and to ourselves as teachers.

6

With touches of humor and a great deal of practicality, they clarify the distinctions between tests, measurement, evaluation, grading and reporting, research and development.

Since neither the writers, nor Shakespeare, discussed two hot measurement issues—performance contracting and educational accountability—let's you and I take a look at them.

Performance Contracting

Performance contracting is not a unique concept, as so many people think. In the middle of the nineteenth century performance contracting was introduced in England, the only essential difference being that the payments went to schools rather than to commercial firms. Many of the current concerns (teaching for the test, for example) were present then. Speaking at the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Ontario Association for Curriculum Development (1971), Sir Alec Clegg, county education officer, West Riding of Yorkshire, noted that "only those aspects of each subject which were susceptible to objective examination were held to be important, and all teaching was teaching to the examination." Performance contracting was abandoned at the turn of the century, but "its baneful influence lingered another fifty years, and even today we have not completely rid ourselves of the damage that it did," according to Sir Clegg.

A similar idea involving payments by results was put into practice in Canada. The following excerpt is from Charles E. Phillips' *The Development of Education in Canada*:

> The effect was, of course, to narrow all school effort to the cramming of content most likely to be tested in the subjects prescribed for examination. The system also caused teachers to concentrate on the average and slightly below-average pupils, with whom their efforts would pay dividends through a larger percentage of passes, and neglect other students—the bright because they would pass anyway, and the dull because they were hopeless or at best a poor risk in terms of expenditure of time. But payment by results undoubtedly did lash both teachers and pupils to work harder at drill and review in order to avoid failure.
>
> As judged by that criterion, the high schools of Ontario improved greatly under the new stimulus. All but a few outstanding exceptions had been in a sorry state in 1872. In that year the smallest were required to employ two teachers of secondary subjects, and the next year all entrants were screened by a uniform written entrance examination. Even so, most of the high schools had little success in getting pupils through the intermediate examination, when it became a basis for payment of grants in 1876. Then, under full pressure of payment by results, teachers and pupils began rapidly to *measure up* [italics added] to the requirements. Whereas at the beginning a very few

> efficient schools earned nearly the whole of the grant, the number of passes achieved by other schools rose so amazingly that the value of a successful candidate dropped in two years from $57 to $9. The latter figure was close to the average that would have been earned if all pupils in the province passed.
>
> One reason for this amazing improvement in efficiency was that trustees were aroused from lethargy. When their school failed to earn grants, their immediate response in several places was to blame the senior master and to dismiss him. . . .
>
> No doubt some of the teachers dismissed were lazy or inefficient. But nearly all were shrewd enough to take advantage of every new means that was offered to get results. Teachers' professional journals were filled with sample examination papers, model answers, and advertisements of little books containing notes on various subjects, the memorization of which would ensure success on the examination. History teaching became the application of a system of mnemonics and the teaching of literature little more. Perth Collegiate Institute offered $10 to every pupil successful on the intermediate examination. . . .
>
> Lists of questions likely to be asked on examinations were openly published and advance copies of actual examination papers were offered for sale confidentially by at least one enterprising individual. He was reported to have done an extensive business in examination papers for Second Class teachers' certificates, the equivalent of the intermediate examinations, before being brought to trial in 1881.
>
> Experience with payment by results in Ontario proved that it is possible to raise standards quickly if the criterion is defined as mastery of prescribed content. But there was a storm of protest against the sacrifice of all other educational values for the attainment of this end. In 1883 payment by results was abandoned in the province.[1]

The Rand Corporation and the Battelle Institute have recently completed two comprehensive independent evaluations of performance contracting in education. The Rand Corporation's report is the result of a sixteen-month detailed evaluation of eight performance contracts in five school districts (Gary, Indiana; Gilroy, California; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Norfolk, Virginia; and Texarkana, Arkansas), with reference to fifteen other performance contracts. The $300,000 evaluative report was sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education. Generally, the findings indicated that the results of student performance fell below the expectations of both the contractors and the school administrators, but that, on the positive side, there was increased innovation on the part of teachers and greater assumption of personal responsibility on the part of students. Findings also indicated that actual per student costs of performance con-

1. Charles E. Phillips. *The Development of Education in Canada* (Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company, 1957), pp. 513-14.

tracts were the same as or slightly less than per student costs of running the more conventional corrective education programs, both being more expensive than regular classroom instruction.

The Battelle Institute report dealt with performance contracting experiments conducted in twenty-one districts under the auspices of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). When OEO Director Philip V. Sanchez learned the results of the $6.5 million performance contracting experiment, he is reported to have said, "Back to the drawing board." OEO officials have indicated that they will continue to experiment with alternatives to traditional systems but that "they are through with performance contracting as a useful tool to improve learning in schools."

Criticism has been leveled at the OEO for dropping the experiment. Edward Trice, superintendent of the pioneering performance-contracting Texarkana School District, said that OEO's assertion that performance contracting is of no value is "as far wrong as can be." Trice cited the anti-dropout effect of his program: "only eight out of eight hundred potential dropouts left school during the past two years" in contrast to "the normal dropout rate for this group—25 percent or two hundred students."

The controversy will continue for some time, as there are more than one hundred performance contracts still in effect.[2]

Educational Accountability

Historical precedents for educational accountability as well as performance contracting can be found in Victorian England, and the best known critic was Matthew Arnold, the great nineteenth century poet who earned his living as a school inspector. In his report for 1867, Arnold wrote:

> Our present system of grants does harm to schools and their instruction by resting its grants too exclusively, at any rate, upon individual examination, prescribed in all its details beforehand by the Central Office. . . .[3]

Today the concept of accountability is being urged upon educators from all directions, and perhaps in some ways rightfully so. But in some communities teachers are virtually in a state of siege, trying to teach while fending off attacks at the same time.

---

2. From "Washington Report," *Phi Delta Kappan* 53 (March 1972), pp. 451-52.
3. Quoted by Alan A. Small, "Accountability in Victorian England," *Phi Delta Kappan* 53 (March 1972), p. 439.

Many educators are responding in a positive manner by questioning some of the standard practices in schools: look at the strong criticism levelled at many standardized tests of English (literature, spelling, vocabulary, reading) that are reviewed in Oscar Buros's newly published two-volume *Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook* (1972).[4]

But critics outside the field of education—who have their hearts in the right place, I'm sure—might do well to put their own houses in order before criticizing education. For some peculiar reason we in education tend to use words and ideas from many different groups, words like "prescriptive" teaching, "inputs" and "outputs," "terminal" students, school "plants," "accountability." I say "some peculiar reason" because, in ways, education is far ahead of the very groups from which these words came. Of all the organized groups in our society, for instance, educators have been the leaders in the movement to meet the needs of all the people, not just those of the middle class.

The medical profession never had any problems in meeting the needs of the poor because until recently the medical profession callously disregarded them. Even today the United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates among the developed nations of the world, and in the U.S. and Canada the lifespan of Indians is far shorter than that of middle-class whites.

The legal system too can be charged with gross negligence in meting out justice to those less fortunate. At this very moment, because courts are so clogged, the majority of people in U.S. prisons *are still awaiting trial*—those being mostly people unable to afford bail.[5]

Only recently has the business and corporate world moved a tiny bit away from the anachronistic and outmoded profit-oriented philosophy of Adam Smith as expounded in *The Wealth of Nations*, a useful document for the nineteenth century but a disastrous one for the twentieth. Some trade unions still keep out blacks and other groups—except on a token basis.

But squarely confronting reality—in their own way and to their own advantage—are those unethical members of the real estate profession who mislead people in order to engage in "block busting" practices and scare tactics designed to drive prices down for quick profits to themselves.

4. Oscar Krisen Buros, ed. *The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook*. Highland Park, New Jersey: The Gryphon Press, 1972.

5. By using videotape, "trials of average length" can be shortened by 50 percent or more, and trials of abnormal length shortened by "a significantly larger percentage," according to Robert L. Simmons, law professor, in "An Answer to Trial Delay," *Center Report*, February 1972, published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions.

Even our very own governmental agencies often respond sluggishly to the needs of the poor. For years, as long as narcotics addiction was confined to ghetto people, little was heard of it, but when addiction began spreading to middle-class homes and schools, committees quickly formed, commissions started holding hearings in cities throughout the land. . . .

To whom is the medical profession held accountable?

To whom is the legal profession held accountable?

To whom are business and corporations held accountable?

To whom are trade unions held accountable?

To whom are real estate operators held accountable?

Teachers and administrators, who in many ways are in the forefront of those groups whom we sometimes try to emulate, can be held *accountable for* only those conditions over which we have control:

> Each participant in the educational process should be held responsible only for those educational outcomes that he can affect by his actions or decisions and only to the extent that he can affect them.[6]

The responsible teacher has always kept abreast of current ideas and concerns in education. The able administrator has always created an atmosphere of trust in which his teachers may feel free to fail as they strive to put their ideas into practice in their classrooms. The responsible public has always provided sufficient funds to enable the administrator to initiate and maintain new educational programs as they are needed.

In the final analysis, of course, we are all accountable for what happens in our educational environment, for while it is certainly true that "no man is an island, entire of itself," it is equally true that each of us who dares to call himself a teacher or administrator must, when the reckoning comes, alone stand accountable: to himself, his students, his colleagues, and his fellow men.

And if we foster and maintain an open relationship with business and other professions, students, and the public in general, obtaining their supportive understanding and selecting only the very best they have to offer, then we will not merely overcome our educational problems, we will triumph over them.

---

6. Stephen M. Barro. "An Approach to Developing Accountability Measures for the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* 52 (December 1970), p. 199.

R. Glenn Martin

THE SELF-WEIGHTING EXAMINATION

Examinations die hard. I stopped giving them for a couple of years, responding to a major trend in education. Later I responded to another major trend by offering options. One option many students chose was to take examinations: they found it less time consuming than doing a major project. No one chose the option of doing both. So—back to examinations.

What kind of examination? I confess to a secret fondness for composing exams. They are not, admittedly, one of the great literary genres, but they have two attractions. They test me—has my year been coherent? —and they can be entertaining: nonconformist, humorous, and so forth. One can make up the kind of exam he would have enjoyed taking.

Hence, the self-weighting examination. The idea is simple. The conventional exam consists of questions all having some kind of weight in the total examination mark. I used to put the weight in parentheses opposite each question, as my own teachers had done: (10) meant that the answer would count as 10 percent of the exam.

But why, I thought one day, should I be the one to weight the questions? Why couldn't the student weight his own? I could see several advantages. First, the student could be judged on his strengths, not on his weaknesses. Second, he could be rescued from the misfortunes that sometimes occur under exam pressure. If he "blew" a question, he could weight it down. Third—and this appealed especially to me—he could more or less construct his own exam out of the raw materials of the course framework. He could write the exam *he* wanted instead of lying in my Procrustean bed. Fourth, he would be encouraged to evaluate

---

Here is a novel approach to testing students. Glenn Martin is associate professor in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta.

himself, to think about his own levels of competence and achievement in various parts of the course.

Disadvantages? Several. One was that the student could evade a weakness he ought not to have. Another was that, with all students writing from strength, it would be harder to recognize various degrees of achievement in the total course. Third, the student might be more shattered by doing badly on an exam of his own choice than on one where he could at least, in self-respect, scorn the emphases I had built in.

In balance, it seemed worth trying.

I began by writing my usual kinds of questions, tapping the various parts of course content, trying to touch all of them. The kind of courses I teach (mostly English "methods") and the kinds of outcomes I hope for from students have to do largely with the upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Hence, questions were largely from Bloom's levels of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. No knowledge or comprehension questions were included because these levels would be implied in the answers at higher levels.

Typical questions:

> Assess for the 70s the legitimacy and appropriateness of the "tripod" curriculum for secondary English, defending it or suggesting the nature of revisions which you see as necessary or desirable.
>
> How feasible is "teaching creativity" with a pupil load of 175?
>
> A very capable student in your creative-writing option tells you that he can no longer do the assignments because they all involve "linear thinking" and the use of print, which is not the medium of his television-oriented generation. Inventing any other circumstances you wish, respond to him. (You may wish to use dialogue or even construct a "nonlinear" answer if you can think of one.)

A dozen such questions. If a student could answer any four in depth and with understanding of the background issues, I'd sign my name to him in a minute.

It was important, of course, that he understand the exam itself. Any confusion about it would hurt his course standing and defeat the purpose of the exam. Hence, these disclaimers and instructions:

> I have no idea that there are any uniquely "right" answers to these questions. Answers, therefore, will be judged on the degree to which they seem to reveal an awareness of, and a constructive approach to, the main problems and issues in secondary English teaching and curriculum. The style of answering need not be, in any narrow sense, "academic."

> Please answer exactly FOUR questions.* You may assign weights of from 10 percent to 40 percent to each answer (otherwise I will weight them equally). Please indicate weights in the left-hand column of this sheet and opposite each answer in the examination book. The examination will stop promptly at the end of two hours.

The format of the examination paper provided a line to the left of each question. Thus:

> Weight (should total 100 percent)
>
> _____% 1. In the light of your past year's experience (including such possible influences as student teaching, this course, reading, and your own ongoing thinking) discuss your present conception of good teaching.
>
> _____% 2. Discuss some problems and possible solutions in teaching *one* of the following: (a) spelling, (b) punctuation, (c) remedial reading, (d) Canadian English.

And so forth. (Also, in the spirit of this type of questioning, the following, typed in upper case at the bottom of the exam sheet: "You may use any materials you wish during the exam, visit the library or other establishment. Please acknowledge all sources [informally]. Please do not confer with other students during the exam—they may be thinking.")

So much, then, for the construction of the examination. What kinds of results did it yield? First, more readable exams. Very few empty or totally mechanical answers. Most students (about 80 percent) selected unequal weightings and wrote more about what they knew more about. Second, no observable reduction in the spread of scores; perhaps, indeed, just the reverse, with a wider gap between stereotyped and superior answers. Third, a good bit of unsolicited favorable reaction to the format. Fourth, visibly less anxiety. I would distribute copies of a previous exam a couple of weeks ahead of time, and students could then concentrate on what seemed to them of most value in their preparations (if any!) for the exam. Student evaluations of the difficulty of the exam rated it "about right" (whatever that means).

A number of students have said they are going to use the same format in some of their own highschool teaching. I have no results on this, but I see no objections in principle to using this method at the secondary level. Multiple-choice exams (or portions) could easily be handled this way. The mechanics, however, do have to be kept simple. Even uni-

*There is nothing magical about "FOUR" questions. On the latest version, I tried the option of three *or* four questions, with a weighting range from 10 to 45 percent. This may be a better version for a two-hour exam, with fewer students in a last-minute scramble.

versity students will assign weights that don't add up exactly to 100 percent. If this happens, I prorate the weightings. (Thus, if the student's weightings add up to only 95 percent, I increase each weighting by multiplying it by $^{100}\%_{95}$, or $^{20}\!/_{19}$, to bring the total to 100 percent; for overweighting I multiply by, say, $^{100}\%_{110}$, or $^{10}\!/_{11}$. Fortunately, I haven't had to do this very often.)

A word about grading the exams: one can, of course, use any scale for marking the answers. On an A through F system, A can be 5; B, 4; C, 3; and so forth. One assigns the scale value (5, 4, 4½, or whatever) to each answer. As with any exam, one then multiplies the scale value for each answer by the weight. Thus, for example:

Question 2	4.5	× 30%	= 1.35
Question 4	3	× 20%	= .60
Question 7	3	× 10%	= .30
Question 10	5	× 40%	= 2.00
			4.25

In this case, the exam score would be a quarter of the way from a B to an A: that is, a B+. This all sounds very mechanical, but so is any exam grading, unless one gives a global subjective grade. (Or eliminates grades, but that's another story.)

This sort of exam is appropriate only for certain kinds of courses—and instructors. The instructor has to believe that depth may be worth as much as breadth, and the course has to support this belief. (I would not, for instance, use this kind of exam for a course in general surgery, nor for one in air safety for commercial pilots.) It does not sample the full range of the course as the well-made, orthodox achievement test does; but neither, for that matter, does any test which offers students a choice of questions. Its compensating virtue is that it invites the student to show what he can do (or at least say) really well at the end of the course. If the standard achievement test ferrets out weaknesses, the self-weighting exam ferrets out strengths. It is poorly adapted to a "homogeneous" model of student performance and correspondingly well-adapted to an individualized model.

In line with which, I suggest as the last exam question the following: "Make up a question of your own choice, appropriate to the scope of the course and not seriously overlapping another you have answered, and answer it." You can't beat that for 40 percent of an exam!

RICHARD ADLER

EXPLORING THE GRADING PROCESS WITH STUDENTS

College students know what usually happens on the first day in any course. The professor arrives, writes his name, rank, and office number on the blackboard, and launches into his normal spiel about the textbooks for the course, required assignments, personal expectations and other bits of information for the semester's work. The students dutifully take notes, being especially careful to record the first assignment and its due date.

I was determined to escape this first-day routine. My major objective for the course, The Methods of Teaching English, was to expose these future teachers to *process* and how it differs from *product* in the English classroom. The first day had to be a demonstration.

The following script is a record of what actually happened on that first day.

INSTRUCTOR: I would like to begin this course by entertaining any questions or concerns that you have at the moment. As future teachers of English, what are your primary concerns, questions, or problems?

STUDENT: Ahh, yes. What are the requirements for this course? In other words, how are we going to be graded?

INSTRUCTOR: Is that a major problem that we want to solve before going any further?

Most everyone nodded his head yes.

INSTRUCTOR: O.K. How best can we attack the problem in this group? As future teachers, you will be faced with this same prob-

---

Richard Adler provides a narrative tour of the process of involving students in determining how their work will be graded. He is assistant professor of English at the University of Montana.

lem. Do you solve it personally through your own method, or do students have any input into the matter?

STUDENT: Do you mean that you're going to allow us to voice our opinions?

INSTRUCTOR: Yes. How would you structure the sequence so this could happen?

STUDENT: One way would be to discuss it as a group with you the teacher leading the discussion.

INSTRUCTOR: That is one way. But I'd rather not influence your opinions and your need to express yourself honestly. Is there another way?

STUDENT: Yes. We can conduct an open discussion among ourselves. That would bring out the ideas. Then we could decide on a solution.

INSTRUCTOR: O.K. That's a possibility. Any other ideas?

STUDENT: Yes. Why not break into groups and discuss the problem. We could appoint a spokesman for each group to report to the large group the findings and recommendations.

INSTRUCTOR: That's another possibility. Any other suggestions?

Silence.

INSTRUCTOR: You've suggested three ways: (1) group discussion with teacher leading, (2) group discussion with decisions at the end, and (3) small groups with a reporter from each. Which do you prefer?

STUDENT: Let's vote.

Instructor reviewed each method and the group voted.

INSTRUCTOR: Suggestion 3 won. How do you want to break up the group? Any preferences for size of the groups?

STUDENT: What happens if I am representing a minority opinion and am outvoted in the group? I may not be able to live with their recommendations.

INSTRUCTOR: Excellent point! How does the format accommodate a minority opinion?

STUDENT: The reporter can summarize the group's decision and then add the opinions which are in the minority.

STUDENT: No. I don't want my beliefs to be cast merely as a minority opinion; I would like for the rest of the class to be able to respond to my opinion.

STUDENT: O.K. We'll have a reporter. He can offer the decisions of the group and the minority opinions of anyone who wishes to have his minority opinion voiced by the reporter. For those who want discussion about their minority opinion, we can open the discussion to the large group after the three reporters have finished.

INSTRUCTOR: Is that acceptable to everyone? We have the three reports, then an open forum for discussion, disagreement, or whatever.

All agreed.

INSTRUCTOR: O.K. Let's go back to the structure and size of the groups. Any preferred number or groupings, or do we just form three groups and begin talking?

STUDENT: Just form three groups and begin. Does that seem O.K.?

General consent.

For the remainder of that hour and for twenty-five minutes into the period the following day, the group discussed and synthesized their ideas. When they indicated that their discussions had ended and the reports were ready, I asked whether they wanted to take notes or have me take the notes. They suggested I take the notes and summarize the consensus of the groups.

GROUP I REPORTER: This group prefers a grading practice and policy to include the following criteria and considerations: one-half self-evaluation and one-half teacher evaluation. Then each student consults with the teacher and between the two of them they decide on a grade.

GROUP II REPORTER: We decided that students should evaluate themselves also, but no grades should be attached to the written evaluation. Another part of the grade should be anonymous criticism by the group, if we are going to explore strategies by leading the class through a lesson. A third part of the grade can come from papers rather than participation. Fourth, no formal tests to be graded, but written ideas about what is happening in class would be helpful to us as teachers.

GROUP III REPORTER: We want to have several options for evaluation. First, the evaluation should be part self-evaluation and part instructor evaluation, then consultation and agreement between the two for a grade. Other considerations are attendance, presentation, and participation. Another area that may not be involved with grading, but is important, is problem-oriented short papers which we present to the group. Together, then, we can search for a solution. Also, we thought about one larger paper or several smaller ones during the course.

Minority opinions centered on two facets of the course. One person preferred not to role play. Another thought she might want to contract for the grade so that she would know just what was expected of her.

STUDENT: What do you think of all that, Mr. Adler?

INSTRUCTOR: First, let me say that I will honor the minority opinions. Individuals may see me and express any personal wishes they have. We'll settle those individually.

If I can summarize, you wish for your grade to evolve from your own evaluation coupled with my evaluation and a face-to-face meeting to determine the final grade. Short papers on problems are also possibilities. Is that acceptable to the entire group?

General consent.

INSTRUCTOR: That evaluation for your part can be written or oral. I will accept either method. As for the anonymous criticism within the class, both sides of a student-led activity will be explored. It is equally as important to us as teachers to explore the effects of the lesson on the students as it is to evaluate and discuss the actual strategy which was used by the person who presented the lesson. In fact, the presenter should be given the first chance to explore orally the successes and problems encountered as the lesson evolved and came to fruition. After that, others in the class can pose questions or suggestions or other possible approaches for that particular lesson.

Then we should talk about the type of learning or experiencing that went on in the minds of the students. Were the objectives reached? What activities or composition situations are possibilities growing out of this lesson? Is drama or improvisation a possibility? Was enough interest generated to sustain another activity and another strategy for the same area?

Does that make any kind of sense to you as a useful procedure for this class?

Some supportive comments and general agreement.

INSTRUCTOR: Generally speaking, I can live with this policy. With respect to the writing assignments, I like your idea that our writing should evolve from discussions or activities in the class, but that is something we can settle later. Basically, I'm talking about writing which evolves from interest rather than assignments which I just assign to you cold, with little interest or motivation on your part to write a paper.

I do have one question. If you were in my position, a teacher, say, of a group of high school students, and they came up with this grading policy, could you live with it?

STUDENT: I'm not sure, but I think so.

STUDENT: Yes. I think I can.

STUDENT: It seems honest enough. I know my group considered a lot of things before we decided our position.

STUDENT: If we are going to change any of the traditional things that have alienated students for so many years, I think we had better be ready to live with this kind of cooperation and understanding.

INSTRUCTOR: That's exactly the point I'm driving at. Do you realize what you have done to yourselves in terms of freedom in the classroom?

STUDENT: Well, I guess we've taken on more responsibility for our affairs than I realized. And yet we did it very democratically. That's the part I liked about the method you used to solve the grading problem. We even decided how to go about it in groups and reporting.

INSTRUCTOR: You have other considerations also. How about the other teachers in the school system? Would they approve? If not, what is your stance or position toward those who disagree?

STUDENT: I think we could cope with that, although it's hard to say, sitting in this chair at this moment. But we did the thing; we know how we feel about it. Now we know the other end of it also, though not having experienced it yet!

INSTRUCTOR: To be perfectly honest about the whole experience, I had no idea that this sense of responsibility would surface as an important point of this activity. Do you feel any different toward the kind of permissiveness which some people abhor in the classroom?

STUDENT: Well, if you're honest about it, there's more responsibility included for us because of it. Permissiveness doesn't mean goofing off. It's going to take more work, if anything. And besides that, I was just thinking of *your* job as we were going through getting ready to discuss the problem.

INSTRUCTOR: What do you mean? Did you feel that during the group discussion and group decisions that you sensed a fruitless effort was evolving?

STUDENT: Yes. I don't think that, as the teacher, I could have let the group mess around that long trying to discuss and decide what to do.

INSTRUCTOR: How many others in this class, at some point or another, wanted me to stop the activity, apply a structure to it, and get on with it?

Thirteen out of twenty-five raised their hands.

STUDENT: I'm glad we didn't do that. We were allowed to work out that part of it, and I think it was better that way.

INSTRUCTOR: Well, that's what we have to find out about ourselves, what styles of teaching and what approaches fit us as individuals. I hope

that during this quarter in this class we can help each other to determine that.

The discussion then continued with questions and explorations about the process we had used to solve the problem of grades in the course. Students' talk centered upon the experience itself and the value of allowing students in any class learn through experience. They had experienced *process* and felt very positive about it as a strategy for teaching any area of English.

The consensus on this grading policy was followed for the course. I was apprehensive at first about the students' choice to meet face-to-face at the end of the quarter to determine each one's grade. But when the time came and the meetings began, I found them to be mature, understanding, and pleased to talk about their personal evaluation and progress in the course. In every instance but two, we agreed on the individual grades with very little discussion. What happened in the two cases where we disagreed was *my* side of the learning experience through process.

GIVING STUDENTS VOICE

Educators can talk about evaluation and grading and accountability and individualization until hell freezes over. The sooner they acknowledge the necessity of giving students some voice in what some of the basic elements of their educations shall be, the sooner they will begin to accomplish the higher goals of equal educational opportunity for all.

Anne H. Adams and R. Baird Shuman
Duke University

KAREN KIRK
SISTER JEAN DUMMER

CRITERION-REFERENCED GRADING IN ENGLISH

This past year our tenth-grade teaching team experimented with a method of grading which puts the emphasis where we believe it belongs: on learning rather than on competing for a grade. What has evolved in our attempt to realize this emphasis is one approach to criterion-referenced grading.

All of us had used norm-referenced grading in the past and had utilized a curve giving a range of grades from 1 to 7. Those who did the "best" work were given the 1's; "second best," the 2's; and so on. A class norm became set, and a student's grades reflected how he compared to others in the class. As we discussed our past grading procedures, we admitted that they inhibited students. They locked a student into a top, middle, or lower bracket, and the student lived up to our expectations of him. Too often, compliance in the classroom or doing an assignment was the result of the voiced or unvoiced threat of a grade. We knew that norm-referenced grading produced hostility, competitiveness, and false security.

Criterion-referenced grading, however, would measure each student on the basis of how many preestablished criteria he met. Successful completion of the criteria, not competing with other members of the class, would become the student's objective.

The criteria we originally established were in actuality only assignments or learning experiences designed to meet the objectives of the course. We decided that there would be twelve of these for the first nine weeks; six would be teacher assigned and six would be self-selected. Self-selected assignments could be chosen from a list of suggestions

---

The values of criterion-referenced grading are described in this article by Sister Jean Dummer and the late Karen Kirk, the Department of Secondary Education, the University of Nebraska.

drawn up jointly by teacher and students. If a student met all twelve criteria, he would receive a grade of 1; if he met eleven, a grade of 2; and so forth. He had to meet at least seven criteria to receive a passing grade of 6.

During the second nine weeks we allowed for greater individualization by letting the students pick any six of eight teacher-assigned criteria. The second six criteria were still self-determined. Some teachers used a formal written contract to negotiate these assignments, while other teachers handled this arrangement orally during class or during student conferences.

The criteria varied according to the content covered during a nine week period. For example, in a contemporary ethnic man and nature unit, the student could choose any six of the following eight teacher-assigned criteria:

1. Rewrite an episode from *The Pigman* from the point of view of a character other than John or Lorraine who was or might have been present at the time of that scene.
2. Produce a visual reaction to any selection in *Black Voices*. Suggestions: collage, bulletin board, slide or opaque projector presentation, film.
3. Tell the class about a book you have read about Indians and your reaction to it. If more than one person read the same book, you may present a group report. Suggestions: *When the Legends Die, Chief, Laughing Boy, Little Big Man, Crazy Horse, Black Elk Speaks, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.*
4. Do a visual, written, or oral project on the current situation in Nebraska of the Indian, the Mexican-American, or the black.
5. Write a paper comparing and contrasting "The Open Boat" and "To Build a Fire." (250-500 words)
6. Participate in and tape at least a twenty-minute small group discussion of three short stories from *Eco-Fiction*. The group should contain no fewer than three and no more than six students.
7. Complete a *Skilpak* on any one of your three lowest reading skills as indicated on the diagnostic test. [A *Skilpak* is a series of simple, sequential exercises designed to improve a particular skill, e.g. reading for main idea.]
8. Be present for and participate in 90 percent of the class discussions.

Self-selected assignments were as varied as the students who instigated them. Two boys investigated the differences between car manufacturers, and a research paper developed. One girl made a slide production of her reaction to *The Learning Tree* by Gordon Parks. Several students decided to compile their creative writing into journals entitled *Me*. The most

popular self-selected assignment was to read a book of the student's choice and to discuss it with the teacher in an individual conference.

In these last nine weeks we have finally reached the stage where the course objectives themselves are the criteria. The students can select or design any one or more of a number of learning experiences to reach each objective or criterion. We believe that this allowance for individualization is another advantage of criterion-referenced grading.

In contrast to some college classes which use criterion-referenced grading, we do not accept all work handed in. If the work is satisfactory, the student receives an S and evaluative comments to direct his further growth, taking into consideration his present level and his customary rate of progress. If the work is unsatisfactory, he receives a U and evaluative comments to explain the rating and to suggest revisions. The student can then elect to redo that assignment or to scrap it and work on something else.

Criterion-referenced grading is particularly encouraging to the poorer student. Preestablished criteria can be met satisfactorily by any and all students. It is unnecessary to differentiate whether or not one student achieves the criteria "better" than another student. The criteria serve as a yardstick by which each student can measure himself or as a set of goals for each student to achieve. In this way criterion-referenced grading rewards the acts of producing and creating themselves. The teacher assumes the role of one who stimulates and encourages rather than one who judges.

Students who achieved well under the norm-referenced system are sometimes frustrated by the fact that they do not know how they are doing in comparison to other students. To help these students make the adjustment to criterion-referenced grading, we give an S+ for papers, projects, or discussions that are extremely well done.

Criterion-referenced grading also has the advantage of being fairly objective. Research has shown that no two teachers grade a set of themes in the same way. In fact, a single teacher might grade the same theme differently on succeeding days. In criterion-referenced grading the teacher gives the student credit for completing a written assignment if it meets the preestablished criterion. While comments and corrections are also given, they have no bearing on the actual crediting of the work. Such positive reinforcement encourages the student to continue writing. This same element of objectivity can be applied to reading and discussion.

Since the grading is so objective, the student is assured a safe atmosphere in which to experiment. He no longer needs to be concerned primarily with second-guessing a teacher in fulfilling an assignment. Rather,

the student can respond personally to the books he is reading. He can reveal emotions and make judgments without fear of being penalized by a grade. Also, he can direct his reading and writing according to his interests and abilities. Success in these areas plus gentle prodding can encourage him to experiment further.

We do not mean to imply that criterion-referenced grading has been the answer to all our problems. Our dissatisfaction with various aspects of it is responsible for the quarterly changes we have effected, but it does seem to be one solution to the grading game.

MEASUREMENT, TESTING, AND EVALUATION

The terms *measurement*, *testing*, and *evaluation* are often used interchangeably, almost as if they were synonyms. They are related, but they are definitely not synonymous. Measurement in education may be defined as any procedure for collecting information about students. Paper and pencil testing is just one method of measurement. Equally important measurement methods are direct observation of performance and the production of a sample. In a speech class, observation of a student delivering a speech may be more important than giving him a test. In a creative writing class, production of a sample theme is probably more important than testing.

Evaluation, on the other hand, is the procedure of using the *results* of measurement to indicate the quality of a student's performance. It is passing judgment. Measurement must precede evaluation, since no proper judgment can be made in the absence of information. Scoring a test, scoring a theme, and observing a student's performance are measurement procedures. Assigning grades on the basis of these measures is evaluation.

Fred M. Smith and Sam Adams
Louisiana State University

ELLEN WOODBRIDGE

CONTRACTING WITH STUDENTS

The following is a report of contract arrangements I made with students during the last month of school.

A week before the contract period was to begin, I presented the idea on paper to the students, and we had a brainstorming session to list possible topics and approaches.

The students' interests varied, as did the approaches they chose. One boy came up with a plan for researching dreams. Other students' projects (individual and group) ranged from making movies of various aspects of school life to putting on plays, making community surveys, interviewing and observing businessmen in action, and preparing written and oral reports.

The first step in the actual writing of the contract was to make a rough draft. The opening of the draft included a statement of the proposed topic and an explanation of why the topic was of interest and of value to explore. The major part of the draft was a list projecting materials, activities, and steps involved in carrying out the enterprise. The third section concerned deadlines for the various steps anticipated and a commitment by students to report their progress to me on a weekly basis. (Insofar as the latter went, most students settled on a fifteen to twenty-minute conference each week to share tangible results of their progress and raise questions or problems. These sessions became precious to both the students and myself, as they provided an individualized relationship which helped us know each other as persons and which changed my role from that of an authoritarian to that of a resource person and advisor.) In this same section of the contract draft the student was to state what form his final presentation to the class would take. In the last section, the student was to raise questions or problems he needed to have resolved if he was

---

Ellen Woodbridge reports on her experience in contracting with high school students. She is affiliated with the School of Theology at Claremont, California.

to carry out his plans successfully. Emphasizing that their grades would be determined solely on the basis of their success in meeting the objectives established in the contract impressed students with the need to make the contract terms both clear and attainable.

I then carefully evaluated the rough drafts and made suggestions as to broadening or narrowing the topic, locating materials, utilizing research methodology, presenting the final result, and so on. I also determined whether a proposal seemed commensurate with a student's abilities.

The revised contracts were duplicated, the students signed them, and so started my experiment to see if normally apathetic "average" sophomores could be set free to explore themselves and their interests with class structure determined only by the plans that they had created.

The results were overwhelmingly positive. Students' remarks included: "It taught me a lot more about my subject," and "I learned from my survey that people really have different opinions." Other comments indicated recognition and expansion of cognitive abilities and study skills: "It helped me think realistically," "I learned how to use things in the library." The majority of positive reactions centered, however, on attitudinal benefits, including growth in self-discipline and honesty with oneself and others: "It helped prepare me for life—I knew if I didn't do it now, I'd do the same thing when I signed contracts later"; "I learned to be honest in saying I would do something"; "Since I felt I had more responsibility, I tried harder." Most students remarked that they found contracting to be enjoyable—"fun" was the word used most often—and one summarized the experience in these words: "It made you feel real big."

Though I view this type of contract system from the perspective of only one year's experience, I nevertheless feel justified in claiming it to be a valuable procedure limited only by the ingenuity and creative vision which students and teachers provide.

A. Ann Guscio

STUDENT CONTRACTS FOR READING AND WRITING

After years of using the conventional three-track system, St. Pius X High School, a parochial school serving the entire Atlanta area, decided to individualize rather than compartmentalize its curriculum. Now in its third year of innovation, the English Department has been free to devise its own methods of evaluation and has begun using student contracts. Of nearly two hundred students, all but six have decided to work toward A's or B's. This has reassured their competition-oriented parents, whose first fear seemed inevitably to be that their children would settle for being "average." There was also concern that a contract, once made, could not be changed, but of course a student contract should never be so inflexible.

The following is an example of a contract given to one class:

Evaluation for Romantics to Today

After reading the Course Outline, you should now decide what grade you want to work toward in this course. Below are listed the three possible grades that you can *earn*. Put a check in the blank beside the grade that you think you can and should be working toward. You should complete two copies of this sheet. Mark each identically and then return one to me for my files. You are to keep the other copy as a reminder of what you have decided to cover in Romantics to Today.

Grade	*Requirements*
_____C	1. Read the assigned materials in your textbooks and outside novels and plays. 2. Do the background readings listed before each small-group discussion. 3. Be prepared to contribute meaningfully to *all sixteen* small-group discussions. These occur almost every week. You may discuss the questions

A. Ann Guscio discusses two student contracts used at St. Pius X High School in Atlanta, Georgia.

with me individually if circumstances warrant it. All discussions must be completed by the end of the semester.
4. Take any tests and do any written work required during the semester.

_____B
1. Do the activities listed above for the C grade.
2. Write the paper on Romantic and Victorian attitudes, as explained in your Course Outline. This paper, done according to good writing standards, must be turned in no later than the last day of the first quarter.

_____A
1. Do all the activities listed above for the B grade.
2. Write the paper on the additional modern short stories, novel, or play, as explained in your Course Outline. This paper, done according to good writing standards, must be turned in no later than the last day of the semester.

Your signature_____

Date_____

One question that arises from a careful reading of this contract is this: What happens if a student misses a discussion or is too shy to participate? This is the purpose of the individual session mentioned in item number 3. Students should also know that their work should reflect a level of quality.

The following is a contract for a semester's composition class, a contract that could, of course, be combined with any literature study taken up during the year:

Evaluation for Composition

(Same introductory remarks as above.)

Grade — *Requirements*

_____C
1. Keep a two-part journal comprising free writing and the rough drafts of your essays.
2. Write, in an acceptable manner, all the assigned essays.
3. Study and take tests on the twenty-five vocabulary lessons in your text at the rate of at least one per week and with a minimum of ten by the end of the first quarter.

_____B
1. Do the same three activities listed above for the C grade.
2. Choose *one* of the following projects, the one that you think can most benefit you:
__a. Work through all the units of *one* of the programmed grammars (2200, 2600, 3200).
__b. Do units in the grammar series as I assign

them to you on the basis of your writing and the diagnostic test that the whole class takes at the beginning of the course.

___c. Work through the Research Paper LAP [a series of questions, library work and sample writing based on a guide for writing the research paper].

_____A

1. Do the same three activities listed for the C grade and one of the projects that you checked for the B grade.
2. Choose *one* of the following projects, each of which depends on the kind of writing you prefer to do:

___a. Do two of the optional projects under B (i.e., grammar and Research Paper LAP).

___b. Do the "Optional" and "Independent Essay" sections in your composition book.

___c. Write a short story or a series of prose sketches, 3000-word minimum.

___d. Write a group of poems totalling at least 300 lines.

Your signature_____

Date_____

As in the literature course, I always confer with students midway through the first quarter and also after the first marking period in order to give them an idea about the quality of their writing and an estimate of their progress toward achieving their desired grades.

ON WRITING

Norman C. Najimy

Norman Najimy is director of English for the public schools of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

In the elementary schools of Pittsfield we have designed and printed our own composition paper: 8½ x 11 typing paper ruled horizontally, with a vertical bar approximately three inches from the left edge. The child writes on the eight-inch width to the right of the bar; the teacher makes corrections and comments on the three-inch margin to the left. First the teacher begins with a positive attitude toward the child's writing, prepared to emphasize the child's achievement, to observe and note the best in the paper, to find even in an incoherent work one phrase on which to build. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are regarded as conventions that we must follow to facilitate our readers' understanding of what we have written. The teacher helps the child to proofread his work. Corrections are made in the three-inch margin, so that the child's work is not defaced. Then the child is allowed time to make his own corrections and revisions. When a grade is given, it is given only for the finished work. To stimulate children's desire to write well, many teachers publish monthly classroom magazines and occasional booklets, frequently in the children's own handwriting.

GEORGE HELD

INVOLVING STUDENT TUTORS IN TEACHING WRITING TO DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

The use of undergraduate teachers at Queens College began as an experiment in improving the teaching of remedial English. When open enrollment began in the fall of 1970, composition teachers found themselves largely unprepared to teach students with severe writing problems. One of the main difficulties encountered was the creation of a classroom atmosphere favorable to learning; most of these open-enrollment students had had a history of unpleasant experiences in high school English classes, where their writing had been ignored or, if attended to, had branded them failures. Thus it seemed hopeless to expect these students to overcome their writing problems in still another conventionally organized composition course.

It was suggested that capable juniors and seniors be paired with faculty members to team teach this course in remedial English. Accordingly, fourteen students were selected to participate in the experiment. So that they would receive credit for their work, they enrolled in a three-credit seminar called "Teaching Good Prose." The seminar, led by an experienced composition teacher, met once a week for an hour to discuss the teaching of writing, practice commenting on student papers, and exchange materials used by individual teams. In addition, each student gave a demonstration lesson which was criticized and evaluated by his fellow students. The students performed the rest of their work for the course with their faculty teammate.

Each team had only one mandate: to be as open as possible to experi-

---

The ideas presented here for teaching and grading the writing of underprepared students are useful at all educational levels. George Held is affiliated with the Department of English at Queens College, Flushing, New York.

mentation in the way they taught their classes. As a result, the team teaching program took several approaches. Some teammates shared the responsibility for leading every class; others occasionally alternated the responsibility for an entire class; while still others divided their students into two small groups, with one teammate responsible for each group. Many teams used alternatively all three of these arrangements.

Team teaching worked also for commenting on student essays and holding conferences with students. When a writing assignment fell due, both teammates read each paper. Usually the teammates alternated being the first reader, the one responsible for writing a summarizing comment on a paper. Through this procedure the student received the advice and encouragement of two different readers, and the team teachers could scrutinize the written comments made by each other in order to weed out unnecessary or overly harsh corrections and call attention to anything important missed by the other reader.

Three conferences per semester between student and teacher were required in the course. When a section was team taught, more time became available for the teachers to hold conferences: the three conferences could be doubled in length or doubled in number. It was fruitful in some cases for both teachers to confer with a student at the same time. However conferences were treated, the remedial student benefitted from the team-teaching arrangement.

Finally, collaboration between teammates affected grading procedures. Though about 50 percent of a student's grade was to be determined by his mark on a final essay scored by two teachers not his own, his own team teachers could cooperatively decide on his grade for the course. Some teammates invited the student to join them in making the decision. The student brought with him all of his writing for the course so that it could be used to judge his progress or lack of it. His grade was then an assessment of improvement as well as of the quality of his writing in relation to the standard for entering the next required course in the composition sequence. In my own experience with grading in this way, student, student teammate, and faculty teammate usually reached a consensus without difficulty.

The main impact of the team-teaching program was felt in the classroom. The team teachers made it clear from the start that they held equal responsibility for conducting the class and that the student teammate was present especially because he or she was close in age and experience to the freshmen; the student teammate would try to overcome any problems of communication that might normally arise between teacher and students in a writing class.

The presence of an undergraduate team teacher had a salubrious effect

that was perhaps less practical than symbolic. From the first day of class his or her presence bespoke an attitude of collaboration between teachers that engendered a similar attitude among students. Any English teacher willing to share his turf with an undergraduate couldn't be all bad. The single figure of authority—always a special threat to the poor writer—vanished from the classroom, to be replaced, not by two figures of authority, but by a pair of cooperating teachers willing to experiment with ways of sharing and delegating authority so that writing might be taught and learned in as untrammeled a way as possible. According to a questionnaire completed by students in team-taught sections, 99 out of 103 respondents thought that the program should be continued, and 83 percent felt that the student teammate had helped them improve their writing. In this regard, the respondents felt that commenting on student papers was the most helpful work done by the student teammates. Thus were symbolic benefits translated into practical ones.

Another practical benefit of having undergraduates help teach remedial English accrued from their willingness to use engaging methods and materials in class, such as word games, role playing, and pieces from the college newspaper. Some of their exercises dealt with the problem of perception. In order to show the class that before one can describe something accurately one must first perceive it accurately, some student teammates passed around the class an object, such as a lemon or a penny. Each freshman examined it and wrote a description of it. Students then took turns reading the descriptions aloud and criticizing them with reference to the object itself. Another exercise in perceiving and describing was based on an action, like tying a bow. Each student wrote a set of directions for tying a bow and exchanged his paper with another student. To test the accuracy of the directions, several students then tried in turn to tie a bow according to the written prescription. Their failure to do so led to a discussion of whether perception or direction had been faulty; the class thus saw the necessary relation between perceiving and writing. (A similar truth can be glimpsed by having the student write a description of an unnamed classmate. When he reads his paper aloud, other people in the class try to guess the person described. Their ability to do so will depend in large measure on the skill of the writer.)

None of this is new to the teaching of writing, but some of it may be new to the college classroom, where an instructor may consider himself and his students to be above such things. But as open enrollment brings more ill-prepared writers to college composition classes, and as long as such courses remain required, teachers will have to find unique ways to teach them. Having a sensitive, intelligent, and able student teammate can help a college instructor meet this challenge.

William B. Stone

GRADING COMPOSITIONS

For some time I had felt that grading in a composition course resulted in a dragged-out aptitude test. Those who could write well when they came into the course received good final grades; those who were "handicapped" in writing skills usually did not do well, even when they had put in considerable effort. Obviously, a form of discrimination was operating, affecting especially working class and black students. Yet I did not choose to give an A, or even a C, merely for effort and thereby untruthfully certify a student's achievement and competence. Still, I resented that writing ability was a major part of a system acting to maintain a "closed" university.

While this was a major cause of concern to me, I was bothered by yet another form of discrimination: the fine distinctions I had to make between C and C–, B and A–, etc. I knew (as did most of my students) that these grades pretended to an accuracy that did not really exist and that irrelevant subjective factors, such as whether a paper was graded before or after dinner, often entered in. These concerns coupled with certain ideas of mine, such as an egotistic belief in the value of my comments on papers–if students would pay attention to them–and a confidence in the usefulness of rewriting, to produce a grading procedure which worked within the conventional framework and yet reduced some of the problems.

I decided that I would assign one of three grades: a "Do Over," an "O.K.," or an "Excellent." The first grade would correspond, roughly, to the conventional F or D; the second, to a C; the last, to a B or A. Those students who made an Excellent on three-quarters or more of their assignments would receive a final grade of A; those who got one-half or more Excellents would receive a B; those with fewer Excellents, but with every grade at least an O.K., would receive a C. A paper marked "Do

---

William Stone describes a new way of grading the writing of students at Indiana University Northwest, Gary.

Over" was to be rewritten until it was O.K.; it could never receive an Excellent, which had to be made on the first submission. There would be no limit to the number of times a paper might be resubmitted until it became O.K. There would be no D's, except for some borderline cases who had most, but not all, of their work O.K. (I planned a few additional refinements; I would assign exercises as well as papers, but some of the longer papers toward the end of the term would count for a double grade, so I might occasionally give a split grade of "Ex/O.K." for work around the B– level. I planned on a total of sixteen grades.)

The theoretical advantages of such a system seemed obvious. To pass the course, some students would have to work harder than others, and I would have to work harder with them. Virtually any student could pass, if he was willing to put in enough effort; on the other hand, no student could pass who had not, eventually, done satisfactory work. An encouragement of the valuable practices of paying attention to instructor comments and of rewriting was built into the system.

Having constructed such a system, I proposed it at the beginning of the semester to my composition sections; most students liked the idea, and the classes were willing to serve as experimental subjects; they correctly judged that in terms of final grades, they had little to lose and possibly something to gain. I was not sure how it would work out. I could be overwhelmed with continual revisions of the same assignment, or my final grade "curves" might be strangely irregular.

The program worked well and was approved by the students, although there were some problems. One assignment was apparently poorly made; so many students had trouble getting an O.K. that I assumed it was my fault, gave up, and called all papers not originally Excellent, O.K. But for most assignments, few students had to rewrite more than once; the rare cases that tried my patience eventually provided one of teaching's greatest satisfactions when I could see them finally catch on. One other problem that bothered me was the feeling that I was doing little to help the "Excellent" students—to move "Excellent" B writing to the A level.

I was happy with the experiment and repeated it the next semester. Other teachers might wish to try something similar.

JULIE THOMPSON KLEIN

THE SMALL-GROUP APPROACH TO WRITING

Unlike many practitioners, my move to small-group discussions for teaching composition arose, not from a finely constructed philosophy of learning, but from a less lofty motive—fatigue. When I first began teaching at the University of Oregon, I scheduled a half-hour private conference with each composition student—a sound plan but far too exhausting to be optimum. So I experimented by meeting with groups of four students each, asking them to bring carbon copies of their rough drafts. Each group met for one hour, so that an individual student was allowed fifteen minutes for reading his paper aloud and receiving students' responses. After the first attempt, the students were so enthusiastic that we decided to have such rough-draft meetings for work on two more papers. In fact, they recommended in their final course evaluations that I use the group method for all papers in my future courses.

I took their advice. Since the University of Oregon operated on ten and eleven-week terms, we worked in two-week units. Here is a detailed account of how we spent our time during one of those periods:

I. *Minimum Employment* (50 to 75 percent of papers).

Tuesday: *Whole class* meets to review stylistic and grammatical problems in previous papers.
Thursday: *Whole class* studies together examples of pertinent stylistic devices for next paper.
Tuesday: *Whole class* reviews models for next paper.
Thursday: *No meeting of whole class.* Instead, groups meet separately for one hour each to examine rough-draft copies of papers. (Meetings spread out on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; final drafts due on following Tuesday.)

The small-group approach to writing enables students to develop their evaluative powers more fully. Julie Thompson Klein is assistant professor of English at Wayne State University.

The group-conference method soon proved to be of greater benefit than my initial time-saving criterion. Immediately I was struck by a high quality in papers; obviously the format of trying out a rough draft on an audience was superior to that of making just one attempt—too often the night before the due date. The greater advantage, though, was camaraderie—a genuinely optimum condition. The students gave each other a much broader audience than the student-teacher duo allowed. Moreover, the group setting allowed each student to exercise, not just store up, critical powers which he could apply to his own work.

Dozens of examples would demonstrate the value of students teaching each other, but one rather vivid incident is worth retelling. Once a white student adopted the voice of an eight-year-old black child for a story about busing. Just prior to his group meeting, he came to my office with a rough draft plagued by artificial dialogue and improbable circumstances. Rather than discuss it at length, since he was quite protective of his work, I waited until after he had read his draft to his group. Immediately he was advised by two black students in his group (one the mother of a child who was being bused and the other a young man active in campus organizations) that his draft was quite unsuccessful. The student's early defensiveness did not reappear because the group members very carefully explained the weaknesses in his story. When they had finished, I had only minor suggestions to make.

While at Wayne State University I have relied upon the group approach even more. In Wayne's intermediate writing course, students generally need some grammatical review and a great deal of work on organization and style. So I tackled the problem in two ways. They wrote frequently—a three to four-page paper each week. This format of steady reliance upon seminar meetings allowed an equal balance between meetings of the whole group and small-group meetings. Here is how a typical week worked for us:

II. *Steady Employment* (100 percent of papers).

Tuesday: *Whole class* discusses stylistic models and individual articles in *Newsweek* (classroom subscription).

Thursday: *No meeting of whole class.* Instead, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, small groups meet for one hour each to analyze rough drafts.

Friday: *Whole class* examines duplicated samples of previous papers and continues *Newsweek* discussion. (Final drafts due on following Tuesday.)

I have most recently used the small-group conference as the very core of a senior-level expository-prose course at Wayne State. Since the in-

structor is free to establish his own order, I instituted a multi-seminar format in which each student would create his own syllabus and then attend a special-interest group. Before, I had organized groups only on the basis of students' availability, especially since Wayne State's students fit their educations around part-time jobs and commuting schedules. However, we were able to organize more effectively by juggling each other's schedules. Here is how a typical week worked under this plan:

III. *Maximum Employment* (100 percent of papers, major emphasis).

Tuesday: *Whole class* meets to discuss *Atlantic* articles and any special stylistic problems.
Thursday: *No class.*
Friday: *No class.* Instead, seminar groups meet separately for one hour on Thursday and Friday. (Final drafts due on following Tuesday.)

At the start of the term in the expository prose course, I offered students a basic plan for constructing their own syllabi: a program of five papers about seven or eight pages in length. They were free to vary that number and length according to their own goals. For example, one student worked on a comprehensive proposal for a children's summer theatre which she submitted to public and private agencies for funding. Each week she presented a portion of the whole piece and waited until the last week to submit the completed proposal. Another student began by combining two papers from the five-paper model for a lengthy study of absenteeism in the automobile industry. For the rest of the term he wrote two more short papers about business and then a short story and several reviews.

With an individual syllabus and regular seminar meetings, the course functioned as a writer's workshop, since each student had his work evaluated by an audience with his interests and talents. We determined the composition of each group in a bull session on the first day of class, when everyone declared his goal for the term. Looking back over several terms, I found that the following five groups usually form:

1. Writing about literature (with opportunity for one original story),
2. Technical writing and writing about work experience,
3. Writing about business and related subjects,
4. General (for those uncommitted to one speciality),
5. Journalism and political-historical writing.

One term I tried to rely solely upon the writing seminars, meeting with the whole class only during the first week. The groups functioned quite well, but we all admitted missing the benefit of a general session together. Now I rely on a combination of the separate group meetings and one

joint meeting each week. We can discuss together stylistic models in the *Atlantic* (to which we have a classroom subscription) yet preserve the seminar meetings for examining rough drafts.

By far the most exciting aspect of my experimentation with small groups has been the development of student-created improvements. During the 1971-72 academic year, the students decided to supplement their seminar meetings by giving each other assignments before their papers were read. For example, one student, who was analyzing a short story, instructed his group to read that story over the weekend. Assignments such as reading articles and newspapers and viewing plays and television specials were quite typical. Soon after that they began to circulate their rough drafts to fellow seminar members in advance of the seminar meetings. Toward the end of the term, several students were asking each other's judgment on work outside the scope of the class itself, such as creative sketches and reports for other classes.

Along this line, two students who had been together in the intermediate writing course decided to join the expository prose course. Together with two new group members, they established an exemplary pace for themselves. They decided that an extra meeting each week would allow them to analyze their work in an even more exhaustive fashion; so, for the remainder of the term, they held two hour-long seminars each week. Frequently they continued evaluating their work after I had left to meet with another group. Since the course can be repeated at Wayne State, three of them decided to return the following year to work together again. Surely the final credit for the effectiveness of self-teaching belongs to the students, for in the end, it reflects their own initiative and creative involvement.

UNDERSTANDING THE EVALUATION

For the E, D, and shaky C student, a written evaluation of his themes is totally inadequate, not because he is incapable of improving, but because of the faulty notion that he understands what the evaluation means—that cryptic reminders like *frag* or *vague* will enable him to change his paper for sentence structure or clarity. Through individual conferences, taped grading, and composition clinics, such students will benefit immeasurably.

Barbara Sussman
Point Park College, Pennsylvania

BERTRAND F. RICHARDS

I AM NO LONGER A GRADER OF PAPERS

I am no longer a grader of papers. I am an appreciative reader of students' attempts to communicate. I am an arbiter of grades. I am a resource person on questions of expression and syntax. I am a court of appeals for the dissatisfied. Unfortunately, I am also a recorder of grades. Here is how my system operates:

1. Papers are handed in to me and they are read by me. (Students know that I have read them.)
2. Each student is given a paper other than his own to grade; he never grades the same student twice.
3. Each paper is assigned two grades: one for mechanics and one for content.
4. Papers are returned to the original writers, and a conference is arranged (in-class) between writer and grader.
5. Each student writes an evaluation ranging in length from a half to a full page about the grading of his paper. In this writing he may agree or disagree with his grader, but he must give his reasons for so doing.
6. All papers are returned to me. I scan the grading and grade any papers where the student grading seems questionable. Students are also at liberty to request that I grade a paper.
7. Any paper on which I changed a grade is returned to its writer (and grader) with a careful and complete explanation of the change.
8. Some papers are rewritten and new grades assigned. Students who did not produce a paper worth rewriting are free to try another, but they are not forced to do so. Only final grades are recorded.

As a result of this procedure, students write a great deal more. They

---

Students who become involved in the grading process learn more about the writing process, according to Bertrand Richards, associate professor of English, Indiana State University, Terre Haute.

have a real and personal interest in composition and evaluation, and the class benefits from having not one but many teachers. I find myself with much more time to devote to my primary task of improving student writing, to the stimulation of thinking and the communication of ideas.

EVALUATION BY CLASSMATES

One former student recently wrote that she had not "graded" a student theme/composition in two years. The students in her classes in an inner-city middle school evaluate each other's work, rework their writings in terms of comments by their peers, and do not submit any written work to the teacher until at least one classmate agrees that the composition is readable. The teacher in turn makes encouraging comments on the papers submitted and discusses the student's writing with him. This teacher also successfully employs slide-tape presentations, with the writing of plans or a story board integral to that process. She has noticed considerable improvement in the quality of work submitted and attributes that improvement largely to the student's intimate and critical involvement with his own work and that of his peers.

Alan M. McLeod
Virginia Commonwealth University

IRENE W. HANSON

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING IN THE CLASSROOM

Diagnostic tests are the most essential and useful tests to the classroom teacher. Every teacher who has given individual reading inventories knows how much valuable information for subsequent teaching she acquires. The many diagnostic tools developed by clinicians working in schools for children with learning problems have proved their value and are often at the root of the spectacular learning successes achieved when children are carefully diagnosed and then provided with individually tailored programs. The problem is that, while many diagnostic tools and tests in various curriculum areas are available, classroom teachers have either assumed or been told to assume that these tools are for use by specialists and clinicians. Classroom teachers, however, are well-educated people and usually need not depend on outside persons to do their testing for them, except for certain highly specialized tests. An experienced teacher frequently devises her own diagnostic tests and tools as she works with children over the years.

Finding time and space for individual diagnostic testing, however, remains a crucial problem. In giving the test, the teacher generally chooses a quiet, partially secluded corner of the classroom for herself and one child and devises flexible, open-ended assignments for the rest of the class. She tests perhaps five to ten children a day and thus completes the testing of the whole class in a week or two without much disruption of a basic schedule.

Such diagnostic testing in reading, spelling, arithmetic, and handwriting is particularly valuable at the start of the school year in September and October, but is certainly productive at any time. The crucial values of individual diagnostic testing are that it provides immediate feedback to

---

The value of using diagnostic testing is discussed by Irene Hanson, associate professor of education at Towson State College in Baltimore, Maryland.

both teacher and pupil without the necessity of grading or imputing blame and that the results can be put to use in daily teaching at once. These are indeed precious assets to the teaching process.

But for the younger children there is another aspect to the time and space problem. Young children often need to be tested out of sight and hearing of others because they are so easily distracted. Yet one cannot safely leave groups of young children unsupervised while the teacher and one child are out of sight, even if only around a corner. In this situation, administrators must come to the rescue and help make provisions for other adults to be present so that individual testing can be possible. There can be teacher aides, interns, parents, older students from the high school or upper grades—in a word, paraprofessionals—to supervise groups of children while a teacher is doing individual testing.

Last fall a group of Towson State College speech therapy students and I gave 232 kindergarten children the *Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation* and the *Northwestern Syntax Screening Test*. The Goldman-Fristoe test takes only three to five minutes per child to administer but does require a quiet spot in order to hear the child's responses clearly. We used temporarily empty classrooms and storage and health rooms near the kindergartens. The test consists of thirty-five colored pictures of objects and activities which the child is asked to name. During the process of naming, the examiner notes any consonant misarticulations on a form provided. This test or a similar one is ordinarily used by speech therapists, but any teacher with adequate hearing could learn to use it as a preliminary screening device. As a result of the articulation testing we discovered that 61 of the 232 children had perfect articulation and 84 children had only one or two errors. But 19 children had twelve or more different consonant misarticulations out of a possible thirty-five errors, and the regularly employed speech therapists agreed that these children should be considered for immediate speech therapy at the kindergarten level. It seemed highly unlikely that they would outgrow their many speech problems by the fall of first grade, and they would then face particular difficulty in learning to read with a phonic approach, not to mention social interaction problems. Since Carroll County, Maryland, the county involved, enrolls about 1200 children in kindergarten a year, the study indicated a possible 8 percent, or about 100 entering kindergarteners a year, who might have similar problems.

How can we teach efficiently? How can we start where the learner is unless we *know* where the learner is? We should be using literally hundreds of these short, easily administered, easily scored, but extremely valuable tests all through the school years, starting in kindergarten or

earlier when possible. These little diagnostic tests tell us where the learner is in a particular area at a particular moment and help us to determine the next step, always the most important and crucial step, for each child. Testing needs to become more a way of beginning learning than a way of ending it.

References

Goldman, R. and M. Fristoe. *Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation*. Circle Pines, Minnesota: American Guidance Services, 1969.

Lee, L. L. *Northwestern Syntax Screening Test*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969.

Carol K. Winkley

HOW TO CONSTRUCT AND ADMINISTER A GROUP INFORMAL READING INVENTORY

The chief purpose of the group Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is to help the teacher select appropriate instructional materials for groups of pupils in a normal classroom setting. Inventories on several different levels can be administered until the instructional reading level for all pupils has been determined. The same technique may also be used to determine whether specific material in any content area is written at an appropriate instructional level for the students who will be reading it. The group IRI may be utilized advantageously at any level above the first grade and is appropriate for use with basal readers, literature books, science and social studies texts, and so on.

In preparing the inventory, the teacher should select a story near the beginning of the particular reader she wishes to evaluate in terms of profitable instruction for each child. The story should be of average length and of interest to both sexes. Like a directed reading lesson, the first step is to prepare an introduction to the story in which a background and purpose for the reading is established. Difficult words should *not* be introduced or discussed.

Some type of written objective comprehension check should be prepared. Multiple-choice questions are recommended with four or five choices. The pupil should not be able to answer the questions without first having read the story. The questions should be of various types, providing measures of several different comprehension skills (getting the main idea, understanding details, making generalizations, drawing inferences, predicting outcomes, etc.). One or two vocabulary questions

---

In many classrooms the books are too hard for many of the children. In this article Carol Winkley tells how to find the appropriate book for each pupil within a short time. She is professor of education at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb.

4/6

should be included, and one question should pertain to the purpose given for reading the selection. The test should comprise ten to twenty-five questions, depending upon the grade level of the material. (Ten is a sufficiently large number at the second-grade level, whereas twenty-five questions would provide a better sampling at the upper-intermediate grade levels and beyond.) Numbering the tests and distributing them in the order that pupils complete the silent reading of the selection will give some indication of each child's rate of reading as compared with other students in the class.

Questions or statements ("Read the part that begins . . .") should be devised to stimulate purposeful oral reading. There should be a question for each student in the group. By sampling each pupil's oral reading, it is possible for the teacher to make an informal assessment of his fluency and word recognition abilities. The teacher should prepare a list of the pupils' names with some type of code for evaluating their oral reading performance and for indicating any observable signs of tension or frustration (lip reading, finger pointing, etc.).

The steps in administering a group Informal Reading Inventory are similar to those advocated for teaching a directed reading lesson.

Preparation: To prepare the children for reading the story the teacher should introduce concepts related to the story and establish background for understanding its content. The pupils are then given some purpose for reading the selection silently. The preparation step is neither as long nor as detailed as the similar step in a directed reading lesson.

Silent Reading: The children should then read the entire story silently, keeping the purpose in mind. The teacher should watch for finger pointing and lip reading and keep a record of such observations. No words are pronounced for the children. Each pupil is asked to raise his hand when he finishes the silent reading.

Written Comprehension Check: The top test in the pile is given to the first child who raises his hand. The second pupil gets the second test, and so forth. Although the silent reading is not timed, the teacher gains some knowledge concerning the rate at which each pupil handles silent reading tasks.

Every child, if possible, is given sufficient time to complete this test. The teacher may pick up the tests as each pupil finishes. Each child should have a library book or some other independent activity to work on while the slower readers are completing the test.

Oral Reading: Each pupil is given an opportunity to read a section of the story aloud. This passage will not be as long as that usually read

orally in an individual IRI. Any significant observations made of the child's reading behavior should be recorded.

After the tests are scored the classroom teacher, applying Betts's criteria, can determine *for each pupil in the group* whether the level of material used is appropriate for instruction, whether the child should be tested again at a lower level, or whether he should be tested again at a higher level. The decision concerning each pupil can be reached by answering the following questions:

1. Does the pupil have 75 percent comprehension at this level? The child's performance on the written comprehension check will provide evidence for answering this question.
2. Does he pronounce most words (95 percent or more) correctly when reading aloud? A record of errors made in the oral reading of even a short passage will be helpful in evaluating a child's word recognition abilities. Material that is clearly too difficult for the reader will be easily identified.
3. Is his oral reading fluent? Hesitations and repetitions are readily observable even in the reading of a short section of a story.
4. Does he evidence few or no signs of tension or frustration?

As an additional consideration, the child's comprehension score should be examined in relation to the relative time consumed in doing the silent reading. Did he read the story quickly and miss many of the questions? Or was he the last child to finish reading the story silently and yet had high understanding of its content?

Other group IRI's are prepared and administered on succeeding days to those children whose reading did not meet the instructional-level criteria and who must be tested again at other levels. Those pupils whose reading performance was very good at this level should be given inventories based on stories from readers at higher levels. Time can be saved by administering inventories prepared on alternate levels. For example, in a third-grade class the first group IRI would be based on a passage in the 3^1 reader. Future inventories at lower levels would use the 2^1 reader and possibly the primer. An inventory at a higher level would be based on a story in the 4^1 reader. If it is discovered that the 4^1 material is too difficult and the 3^1 level story appears to be too easy for some group of children, their instruction could begin at the 3^2 level.

A teacher, using three to five group Informal Reading Inventories on different levels, can assess the appropriate instructional reading level of each pupil in her classroom by the end of the first week of school.

References

Betts, Emmett A. *Foundations of Reading Instruction.* New York: American Book Co., 1957, pp. 447-50.
Johnson, Marjorie S. and Roy A. Kress. *Informal Reading Inventories.* Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1965, pp. 23-27.
McCracken, Robert A. *Standard Reading Inventory.* Klamath Falls, Oregon: Klamath Printing Co., 1966.
Silvaroli, Nicholas J. *Classroom Reading Inventory.* Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1969.

IQ TESTING

IQ testing must either be redesigned or abolished, for as it is presently run, it is not only misleading but harmful.

Marilyn Gratton
Glendora High School, California

JOANNE OLSON

THE HAND TEST

The "Hand Test" will aid the paraprofessional in selecting reading material that is appropriate for the child. Furthermore, it is a simple test that can be explained to a large group in less than ten minutes. It is very effective and virtually guarantees that a child will not be placed in material that is too difficult for him.

The instructions given to the paraprofessional for administering the Hand Test are as follows:

1. Take the child with you when you are finding a book for him. If he cannot go to the library with you, choose a few books that you think might be suitable for him.
2. Open the book chosen to a typical page.
3. Ask the child to read aloud until you tell him to stop.
4. Have the child read about one hundred words aloud.
5. While he is reading, keep track of the number of words that he is not able to say immediately. (The paraprofessional can count these words on his fingers—thus, the "Hand Test.")
6. If the child does not recognize immediately six or more words, the book is probably too difficult for him and he should not read it. (If the paraprofessional feels that the child should be exposed to the ideas in the book, there is no harm in having him read it to the child.) When one book has been found to be too difficult for the child, the paraprofessional should try another book.
7. If he makes five errors or less, ask him five easy questions about the material that he has just read.
8. If the child makes between two and five errors when he reads aloud and correctly answers all the questions or has difficulty with only

---

With the increased number of paraprofessionals in the schools, teachers may wish to tell them about the "Hand Test," a way of finding the reading levels of children. Joanne Olson is affiliated with the University of Houston.

one question, then the material is suitable for the child if the paraprofessional is nearby to give plenty of help. If the child has difficulty with one word or no words when he reads aloud and has no difficulty with the questions, then the child should be able to read the book with little or no help from anyone.

The theory underlying the Hand Test is the same as that underlying the Informal Reading Inventory. Instructional level is commonly accepted as being the level where the child can read at least 95 percent of the words accurately and answer at least 75 percent of the comprehension questions accurately. The usual standards for the independent level are 99 percent of the words called correctly and 90 percent of the comprehension questions answered appropriately. These criteria are incorporated in the Hand Test.

Reference

Betts, Emmett A. *Foundations of Reading Instruction.* New York: American Book Co., 1957.

Blanche Hope Smith

STANLEY

Stanley, a fourth grade pupil, was referred for diagnosis by his mother. Prior to a car accident, he apparently had no learning problems. He made average progress in school, and his teachers felt that he worked hard independently or with groups, was cooperative, obedient, and got along well with his peers. After the accident, his progress was below grade level, and his teachers observed that he had difficulty recognizing and forming the letters of the alphabet, that he was a very quiet child who became sullen if he could not answer questions.

At the time of diagnosis, Stanley was nearly ten years old, with normal height, weight, hearing, and vision. Coordination and diet were found adequate in a recent medical examination. According to accident information supplied by his parents, Stanley suffered a cerebral contusion (bruising) with brain injury. With a 20 percent paralysis on the left side, he has some neurological loss, and although he has not had seizures and is not on medication, he does have an abnormal electroencephalogram.

Stanley is the middle child in a family of three, a brother two years older and a sister one year younger. He had a normal infancy and early childhood. Both his parents work, although they enjoy spending time with their children. They are aware of Stanley's learning problems and encourage and support him in all activities. Stanley is quiet, shy, aggressive, and independent. He likes to draw, associate with small groups, look at picture books, watch television. He enjoys going on trips: visiting relatives, eating out, visiting the zoo, attending movies. He does not like his chores at home and is afraid of dogs.

A sociogram has revealed that Stanley interacts well with his classmates and has exhibited leadership ability. His classroom teacher believes that he is relatively secure but that he is one of her weaker pupils. He is

---

This case reveals ways of assessing the skills and abilities of one youngster. Blanche Hope Smith teaches at Highland Park School in Richmond, Virginia.

a cooperative, apparently adjusted pupil and is doing his best, but he does not comprehend new material when it is presented; an extra explanation is necessary for him to understand what is expected of him. Performance is good in oral language, math, and art activities, but he does not know how to attack words. His oral reading is poor, and his sight vocabulary is limited. Occasionally he transposes words from near copy. Stanley is in the slowest group of children in a team-teaching situation. He is using *Book A* of the Lippincott (1970) series. Spelling is his best area in this group.

The results of the evaluation of Stanley's speech by the speech therapist show that his speech is normal, sentence construction good, and that he talks well. He told the speech therapist, "I used to read good but after the accident I cannot read so well."

The following are the results of a battery of tests given to Stanley:

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children:

Verbal IQ	72
Performance IQ	80
Full Scale IQ	75

Slosson Intelligence Test:

	20 October 1971	*25 January 1972*
Mental Age	9-2	8-10
IQ	92	88

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test B:

Mental Age	6.2
IQ	68
Percentile	0

Goodenough-Harris Draw a Man Test:

	Standard Score	*Percentile Rank*
Man	107	68
Woman	102	55
Self	61	0
Total	104	

Vineland Social Maturity Test:

Total Score	84
Age Equivalent	12.0
Social Quotient	100

Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty:

Oral Reading	Preprimer
Silent Reading	Preprimer
Listening Comprehension	Preprimer
Flash Words	Preprimer
Word Analysis	Preprimer
Visual Memory	3.5
Sounds	3.5

Slosson Oral Reading Test:		
September 14, 1971		.08
December 18, 1971		1.3
January 21, 1972		1.3
Dolch 220 Sight Words:		
Equivalent Reader		Preprimer (66 words known)
Metropolitan Achievement Tests C (Upper Primary):		
Word Knowledge		1.6
Discrimination		1.7
Reading		2.0
Wide Range Achievement Test:		
Reading		1.9
Spelling		1.5
Arithmetic		3.0
Auditory Discrimination Test II (Wepman):		
Error Score	X 1/30	Y 0/10
Harris Tests of Lateral Dominance:		
Knowledge of Left and Right		Normal
Hand and Eye		Strong Right
Foot		Mixed
Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities:		
Composite PLA		6.11
Sum of SS		255
Mean SS		25.5
Median SS		25.5
Subtests		Scaled Score
Auditory Reception		19
Visual Reception		24
Visual Memory		32
Auditory Association		14
Auditory Memory		33
Visual Association		27
Visual Closure		33
Verbal Expression		23
Grammatic Closure		14
Manual Expression		36

Other tests given to Stanley included the *Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test* and the *Slosson Drawing Coordination Test.*

Test results showed that Stanley's spontaneous speech is good; reading, spelling, and writing are the areas where he is having the greatest difficulty acquiring skills. His intelligence appears to be low average. His expression is stronger than his reception and association processes. He is socially mature, but his body concepts and self-image may have been damaged during the accident.

3-4

A check of his oral reading revealed that he has a very limited reading vocabulary, uses inadequate phrasing, has no method of word analysis, guessed at words, does not know blends, and confuses words of similar configuration. Other oral reading difficulties include repetitions, omissions, additions, and substitutions. Silent reading difficulties include constant lip movement and vocalization. Comprehension difficulties suggest poor recall, inaccurate memory, and guesses.

With help, Stanley should be able to compensate for his injury. He is capable of reading performance equivalent to that of the third grade level. He has good visual memory, auditory memory, and expression processes. He has difficulty grasping relationships and associations auditorily, and initial strategies for remediation should begin with the expression processes, visual and auditory modalities. Associative learning activities and visual thinking exercises are needed to help him in transferring the auditory symbols into printed symbols. The *Language Master*, the *Peabody Language Development Kit, Level 3*, and the Fernald (1943) method of retraining basic skills may improve these conditions.

Observations of Stanley's task performances revealed that he may fail on an easy assignment and immediately complete correctly a more difficult one. The language-experience approach should be used with special emphasis on the specific sounds of parts of words. Faulty oral reading habits may be helped by the use of word cards, phrase cards, word games, picture puzzles, dictionary skills, and contrast, comparison, and geo-board exercises. Grammar skills may be improved by work with sentence patterns, syntax and inflections, affixes, word order, word choice, and word usage. Use of Silver Burdett, *Starter 101, A Structured Beginning Reading Program* (1971); Addison-Wesley, *Early Reading Program, Big Boy* (1971); Pyramid, *Primary Dictionary, Dictionary I*, (1971); and the Newbery Award records, cassettes, and filmstrips should also be helpful. Stanley needs individualized instruction, reinforcement, encouragement, and success if he is to continue to progress. A request was made for reassignment to another school; however, there is a waiting list. So that he may have an opportunity to acquire some skills while awaiting reassignment, an attempt has been made to enlist the help of special school personnel. The physical education instructor has been asked to set aside a few minutes each day to work out with Stanley. The speech therapist has agreed to work with him one day a week for thirty minutes on blends and sight words. The language consultant has also agreed to work with him four days a week for thirty minutes using a visual-auditory language program, the Education Progress, *Audio Reading Progress Laboratory, Level I* (1970) and the Lippincott, *Reading Awareness Program* (1971).

The team teacher of reading will continue her regular program, and the classroom teacher will use the other previously mentioned materials. The nurse will continue to keep a close watch on Stanley to detect any physical changes.

Is there a Stanley in your classroom? What does the future hold for pupils like Stanley? Will they acquire the necessary skills they so badly need?

Materials

Brown, Amy, John Downing, and John Sceats. *Primary Dictionary, Dictionary 1.* New York: Pyramid Publications, 1971.

Dunn, Lloyd M. and James O. Smith. *Peabody Language Development Kit, Level 3.* Circle Pines Minnesota: American Guidance Service, 1967.

Fernald, Grace M. *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1943.

Language Master. Chicago: Bell and Howell Co.

McCracken, Glenn and Charles C. Walcutt. *Level A Codebook.* Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1970.

Newbery Award Filmstrips. New York: Newbery Award Records, Inc.

Newbery Award Records and Cassettes Library. New York: Newbery Award Records, Inc.

O'Keefe, Ruth Ann. *Starter 101, A Structured Beginning Reading Program.* Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Co., 1971.

Platt, Penny. *Early Reading Program, Big Boy.* Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971.

Reinach, Jacquelyn and Charles C. Walcutt. *Reading Awareness.* Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co.. 1971.

Sanford, Adrian B. and Diane Keech. *Audio Reading Laboratory, Level 1.* Palo Alto: Educational Progress Corporation, 1970.

Edward J. Weber
Betty J. Weber

GRADING CHILDREN HUMANELY

We would like to share with you one of the most successful techniques we have observed regarding teacher evaluation of readiness and beginning reading papers. Mrs. Ross checks over the children's papers as soon as possible after collecting them, sometimes as they are completed and as her students move on to independent activities. She fashions that inevitable happy face in the corner of most papers. As she comes to Nancy's incorrect paper, she calls Nancy to her side; after additional instructions, often mere repetition of directions, she provides Nancy with the opportunity to repeat the activity. Nancy finishes and then watches until the happy face smiles from her paper, too. She happily returns to the counting game she had been working with.

After a few more happy faces, Larry's paper. Mrs. Ross knows her pupils well and realizes she should never have given Larry this paper to do. She "files" Larry's paper, calls him over, and provides a task which is on his own level. When he finishes, he asks if he might help to make the smiling face.

Only one or two other pupils require this "second chance" if Mrs. Ross has done a good job of assigning tasks. If more than a few children do not succeed on their first attempt, Mrs. Ross knows that she must provide additional experiences in this area, that it is she and not her pupils who has done less than a good job. Occasionally a child receives even a third or fourth opportunity to succeed. His final attempt is often with much teacher assistance.

Many times, to avoid the misleading picture to parents that an endless stream of perfect papers may provide, Mrs. Ross staples the first, second,

---

Some children learn about failure early, but a successful way of grading is reported by this husband and wife team; their combined experience includes teaching and elementary school administration in New Jersey, California, and North Carolina.

and third attempts to the final, successful paper. Her observations show that no feelings of failure seem to be experienced by those who repeat activities, especially when she makes comments like, "You were fooling me. I knew you could do it!"

We have seen this same basic technique used effectively throughout the elementary grades, usually with a special block of time set aside in the afternoon session for study, research, and teacher assistance.

MEASUREMENT AND REINFORCEMENT

Measurement affects the student by the way in which it reinforces his learning efforts. This reinforcement may be positive or negative. When a student successfully completes a learning task and finds a high mark on his paper, he is positively reinforced for his efforts. As his learning efforts continue to bring him positive reinforcement, he continues to persist in this kind of behavior. Most teachers have been so positively reinforced for their learning efforts that they have continued going to school—elementary, high school, college, and graduate school.

If at the end of a learning task, the student receives a low mark on his paper, he is negatively reinforced. One low mark will not make a great difference, but continued low marks over a period of years will cause him to desist from the desired kinds of behavior. The most crucial period is the first three years of school, when the student's concept of school and learning is being formed. This, of course, may be an oversimplification of reinforcement; and factors other than marks also contribute to a child's concept of self and school. But measurement results are either positive or negative reinforcement, and this role of measurement should be considered by the teacher. This does not mean that a teacher should give ridiculously easy tests just so that every student can make a high mark. Unearned high marks are not in themselves positively reinforcing.

Hopefully, tests, homework, classwork, and other measurement procedures will be used constantly (not just at the end of a unit or reporting period) to provide feedback on the effects of teaching and learning. If something is being misunderstood or not learned properly, then modification in either teaching, learning, or both may be made to keep the student moving in a smooth progression toward the desired goal.

Fred M. Smith and Sam Adams
Louisiana State University

JULIA M. GOTTESMAN

MAKING AND EVALUATING LITERARY SCRAPBOOKS

The Scrapbook

Purpose:

1. To assist you in conceptualizing ideas in your book;
2. To provide a stimulus for your Book Talk;
3. To interest your listeners in the book;
4. To create a mini-scrapbook library for other students to read.

Product:

1. A mini-scrapbook which portrays the world of your book as created by the author out of his imagination.

Process:

1. Review your book by taking brief notes on persons, places, and events.
2. Request the following materials:
   a. Cover pages: select a color appropriate to the tone of your book.
   b. Five to seven inside pages.
3. Create a mini-scrapbook using your imagination and artistic talent.
   a. The *cover* should have the book title, the author's name, and an appropriate picture or drawing on it.
   b. The *title page* should include bibliographic information, the setting (time and place), the principle characters and a brief description of each, and your name and the date.
   c. The *contents* can be magazine pictures, drawings, simulated telegrams, maps, invitations, notes, etc.–anything relevant to the world of the main character.
   d. Each item should be carefully explained from the *point of view* of the main character.
   e. The scrapbook should be *unified* by some device or symbol appropriate to the book which you read.

One way students can respond to literature, Julia Gottesman suggests, is by making scrapbooks. On these pages she provides an outline for making and evaluating scrapbooks. She teaches junior high English in Los Angeles.

Scrapbook Evaluation

Student_____ Student Evaluator_____

Rationale:

Because you created a book of your own, this scrapbook ought to be evaluated in its own right. Therefore, before you share your scrapbook with your Small Group, you can learn how effective your own scrapbook is by having another person measure yours against the criteria of the assignment and by studying someone else's scrapbook in detail.

Procedure:

READ carefully the entire scrapbook given you.

WRITE "yes" or "no" before the following:

1. Does the cover contain:
   _____the book title?
   _____the author's name?
   _____an illustration?
2. Does the title page contain:
   _____the bibliographic information?
   _____the setting (time and place)?
   _____a list of principal characters?
   _____a brief description of the characters?
   _____the student's name and the date?

EVALUATE the degree of success of the scrapbook by placing a check in the appropriate area.

Are the contents:	yes	all right	needs improvement
a. interesting to read?	____	____	____
b. understandable?	____	____	____
c. artistic in arrangement?	____	____	____
d. carefully executed?	____	____	____
e. written from the main character's point of view?	____	____	____
f. unified by some device?	____	____	____

COMMENT on a separate page:

1. Describe some unique or special use of pictures or other material in the scrapbook, if any.
2. After studying this scrapbook carefully, explain what you have learned about your own work on your scrapbook.

Ernest R. House

TEACHING AND GRADING THE GIFTED

Here is an abbreviated case study of English as it is taught in a "gifted" class in a Chicago suburb. The community is quite wealthy, the students quite intelligent (although those in this class have been selected on the basis of creativity rather than intelligence), and the classes are rather small. Nonetheless, in spite of these special circumstances, most English teachers would feel right at home.

Twelve students sit in a circle in a small room which has an aquarium, hanging plants, and old farm tools around. The teacher starts the students brainstorming about what a snowflake means to them and about butterflies. He asks them for similarities between the two. The teacher asks almost two dozen questions: What does bark make you think of? How does it feel when you put it in your hand? How would you feel if you were a tree? These ideas are to be used in poems the students are writing.

During this phase of the class session the teacher gives a few directions, talks, and asks questions about half the time, while half the time the students talk and respond to questions. During the middle of the period the students experience considerable difficulty in producing ideas. Half the time there is silence. The teacher lets them work in teams while he helps and motivates. In the last part of the class, students recite some of their poems. The comments of the teacher are half questions and comments and half praise and acceptance of students' ideas and feelings.

For the total class period the students talk 44 percent of the time. Relatively little of this talk is in direct response to the teacher's questions. Instead, much is self-initiated. Students introduce their own ideas and listen and talk with each other. This kind and amount of student involvement is unusual compared to averages in other classes, even among gifted students.

Ernest House is affiliated with the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation at the University of Illinois.

For the whole class period the teacher talks 33 percent of the time, a very low amount compared to averages in other classes we have observed. Much of the teacher's talk involves praising and accepting the ideas and feelings of the students. There are no chastising statements at all.

This small amount of talk (and the kind of comments involved) is consistent with the philosophy and goals of the teacher. His main goal is the encouragement of creativity and critical thinking. The ideal is to get students to become more confident in producing and using their own ideas; they are eventually expected to challenge and question the teacher. Students are also expected to develop skills in writing and speaking and to learn how to focus on a problem. The teacher sees the successful student as one who wants to continue activities such as writing and to apply techniques such as brainstorming to other subject areas. The student should develop an inquiring attitude.

As in most language arts classes, the students read, discuss, give reports and talks, write stories and poems. Once a week they have a Junior Great Books discussion. However, they seem to approach these tasks somewhat differently. At times the students are asked to draw implications from reading materials. The main requirement of these materials is that they have multiple meanings which force the students "to dig": that is, that the materials are complex enough that there is no one "right" answer. The teacher asks interpretative questions to stimulate the class; the student is expected to back up his opinions with facts and to support his ideas with evidence.

The teacher tries to get students to draw from their own experiences. He tries to get them to consider problems that puzzle adults, not just make-believe issues. As he sees it, he is trying to create an atmosphere of "psychological safety" where ideas can be written about and spoken about freely. The main expectation is that students develop a fluency of ideas. In producing these ideas and trying to use them, it is also important that the teacher himself serve as a model for thinking and considering and listening. As the teacher sees it, the class is a balance between structure and no structure. Too much structure leads to an inhibition of ideas; too little leads to chaos.

As for grading, no tests or grades are given. The teacher evaluates each student's work by talking with him about it. For example, the teacher may have lunch with an individual student to discuss a poem or talk the student gave. Students also get daily feedback from the rest of the class. Considerable attention is given to discussion of student work by both

students and teacher. Much attention is paid to the student's personal feelings and opinions.

Reference

House, Ernest R., Joe M. Steele, and Thomas Kerins. *The Gifted Classrooms*. Urbana: Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation, The University of Illinois, 1971.

EVALUATING STUDENT POETRY IN MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS

One successful means for evaluating student poetry has been a multimedia presentation to other English sections. Each student selects his best poem or poems and the students meet in groups to arrange the poems in a program, make needed revisions, and select slides and music to accompany them. They conduct run-throughs with each author reading his poem or poems, coordinating his reading with the slides and taped music, working to achieve the right pacing, timing, blending of music and slides, and so forth. Other classes come for the presentation, and each visitor receives a script to read through before the presentation. They give their reactions orally and make written comments on the script. With this additional input, the student author makes more revisions. Sometimes the slides and music give his poem a new slant. Then a draft comes in for my evaluation and grading; my remarks are usually positive and the grades usually high.

Charles McLain
Lakewood High School, Colorado

Helen Arlene Kozicki

MAKING A COLLAGE OF 'THE JUNGLE'

In dealing with problems that beset the naive and illiterate Jurgis and his family in *The Jungle*, Upton Sinclair provides a unique opportunity to relate these same problems to the current lives of students. The why of compulsory education creeps into the minds of recalcitrants who have been eagerly awaiting the day of their becoming O.C.A. (Over Compulsory Age). It is the harshness of reality impinging upon Ona and Jurgis, Elzbieta and the children that breaks through the miasma with which society shields many teenagers. Through *The Jungle* they can see how the undereducated can be cheated, gulled, misused, put upon, and deprived of their money, health, vigor, ability to work—even their honor.

When class members had read about half the book—at which point the devastating impact of Jurgis's experiences had become abundantly clear—I directed them to make collages using identifying data relating to a single character or group of characters, an incident judged to be of particular importance to the novel's development, and those background factors which are determining elements in the novel. One week for collecting material, words and pictures from magazines and newspapers, provided sufficient time for the students to ruminate on the subject and discuss it among themselves.

As the students handed in their collages, each one told about the component parts, the conceptions that they represented. One collage portrayed little people walking down a muddy street, a tall man holding a bottle of liquor, and houses with For Sale signs on them. Over all brooded a monster labelled *stockyards*, whose noxious breath darkened the atmosphere. Another collage showed an angelic looking girl with a halo, menaced by an evil looking man and woman whose hands were full of

---

Checking the reading of students can be done creatively; this author suggests having students make collages. Helen Arlene Kozicki teaches in Racine, Wisconsin.

money, and haunted by the specters of starving people. A third collage showed a man in top hat sprawling at a table and surrounded by wine bottles and dollar signs, while a pompous butler and growling dog menaced a little man in tattered clothes. After each had explained the meaning of the imagery, his collage was numbered and pinned to the bulletin board.

The next day, members of the class were asked to choose a collage, not their own, to be the subject of a paper discussing the imagery used and how or whether it related to the novel. Students were urged to begin with a thesis based on the constituents of the collage and what was indicated by them. They were to prove their statements with facts from the novel.

This paper was given to the person whose collage it evaluated, and the two discussed their opinions in class in the form of a dialogue. Differences of insight were brought out in this manner. The characters of Jurgis and Ona, Elzbieta and Marija, and the many lesser ones were discussed, and the socioeconomic problems besetting them became clear.

From student discussions it was clear that their experiences in creating collages had helped them in understanding character development as well as other facets of the novel. They then began to relate persons and incidents in the novel to stories they had read in the newspapers. In short, making collages relating to *The Jungle* was a very useful way of helping students gain a greater insight into the novel and its author as well as into themselves and their world.

TAPE-RECORDED EVALUATIONS

Some teachers report success with the use of comments tape-recorded while reading student papers. Each student owns his own cassette which he hands in with each paper. When the paper is returned, he goes to the library to check out a cassette player and consider his teacher's critique. The series of sequential comments on one cassette provides the advantages of giving the student an opportunity to review comments cumulatively for the semester or year and of providing specific points of discussion for a pupil-teacher conference.

Dennis J. Hannan
Wappingers Central School
Wappingers Falls, New York

Dixie S. Jackson
A. W. Burger

COMBINING WRITING WITH AGRONOMY

Five years ago the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois established an English Counseling Service and hired a full-time English instructor to help the faculty develop a writing-improvement plan for the college. One part of this plan reinforces writing skills by providing writing-review lectures and tape recorded editing of research reports assigned students in Agronomy 121, a field crop science course. This approach to writing improvement permits highly individualized instruction at a time when students are motivated to improve writing skills, and it has resulted in measurable increases in students' abilities to detect errors common in writing the research report.

During the first half of the agronomy course, each student is assigned a problem concerning plant ecology and researches it in a laboratory experiment. After completing the experiment, he presents his findings in a report format acceptable to *Agronomy Journal*, a major periodical for this discipline. As soon as the experiment is assigned, the English counselor becomes involved in the project.

During a regular class meeting the counselor conducts an hour-long review of writing style appropriate for the journal article. The review emphasizes choosing active verbs; structuring concise sentences; avoiding wordiness, redundancy, and technical jargon; punctuating for clarity; and otherwise revising to meet the reader's expectations. The discussion touches on the format suitable for the paper; the use of charts, graphs, and other appropriate pictographic materials; and the accepted form for documenting the paper. Agronomic subject matter is used for all examples

---

Teachers will find many tips in this interesting approach to improving and testing the writing of students who are not directly involved in English. Dixie Jackson and A. W. Burger are affiliated with the College of Agriculture, University of Illinois, Urbana.

and illustrations. Each student receives a handout which discusses the lecture materials in greater detail and a check sheet which helps him systematically review his draft of the article.

When the student finishes an article, the English counselor edits it, considering organization, format, documentation, use of pictographic materials, and stylistic matters. Using cassette tapes, the counselor then reviews each paper, outlining for the student the strengths and weaknesses of the article, expanding upon the editorial markings, and suggesting revisions. The counselor concludes each tape by inviting the student to visit him for further discussion of the written or taped comments. After listening to the tape in an autotutorial carrel which is part of the Illinois Programmed Agronomic Teaching System, the student revises his article and submits it to the agronomy course instructor for grading. The student also prepares a master copy which is reproduced for others in his laboratory section. Later he discusses the paper with those students.

The review of writing skills in the agronomy course takes advantage of a learning environment which usually cannot be duplicated in a conventional writing class. The student, involved in an assignment he finds more meaningful than many given in writing classes, is motivated to improve writing skills. This motivation is increased by his knowledge that similar research reports will be assigned in other agricultural courses.

The novelty of encountering the English teacher in the agricultural classroom is also a positive factor in the program. The English teacher and all the skills he emphasizes are usually encountered only in writing courses, which many agriculture students consider "irrelevant." These students therefore often regard writing as an end in itself, not as a tool useful in all university courses and later in a career. Bringing the English teacher into the agronomy classroom to stress writing skills immediately applicable in a significant assignment enables students to recognize the function of effective writing. This favorable contact with the English teacher is enhanced by the fact that he merely edits and does not grade the students' reports. Since they recognize that the counselor is helping improve their reports, they are receptive to criticism.

Because taping comments takes less time than writing detailed notes, the tapes permit a high degree of individualization of instruction. If the student's paper is basically well written, the counselor helps to polish his style. However, if the paper is poorly written, the counselor attacks basic problems and omits consideration of finer points. The taped comments praise as well as criticize. In addition to indicating that revision *is* needed, they explain *why* it is needed and suggest possible revisions.

Also contributing to the learning of writing skills is the fact that the

student thoroughly understands the materials about which he writes. This is not often the case when he has selected and briefly researched a topic for a writing course. Possessing this familiarity with the materials, the student more easily understands lack of clarity, faulty logic, and other flaws which the counselor notes in the paper. The conciseness and brevity desirable in scientific writing perhaps also make recognition of some stylistic flaws easier than in creative writing assignments.

During the 1971 fall semester, pretests and posttests were given to measure the effectiveness of the project in teaching students to recognize errors common in the research report. All test items were agronomic in subject matter, and several sentences in the test were adapted from papers students had written for the assignment during previous semesters.

The pretest was administered by the English counselor prior to the writing-review lecture. Students were allowed as much time as they wished to complete the test. The posttest was administered eight weeks later, after students had completed revisions of their research reports. Since the pretest was never discussed with students, the same test was used as a posttest. Fifty-nine students completed both tests. Item analysis by the University of Illinois Office of Instructional Resources indicated that the test was reliable and that the items discriminated between the poor and good students.

The test consisted of four parts: Part I, *Correctness,* required students to read eight sentences and identify them as (a) correct, (b) containing a punctuation error, (c) containing a subject-verb agreement error, (d) containing a dangling modifier, or (e) containing a spelling error. Part II, *Conciseness,* included four sets of sentences each containing three versions of a single statement. The student was required to identify the best sentence from each group. To identify the best version, the student had to recognize wordiness, technical jargon, redundancy, and other related stylistic weaknesses often found in scientific writing. Part III, *Literature Citations,* consisted of four items which required the student to recognize the correct form for literature citations in a biological sciences paper. A correlated *t*-test was calculated on scores from Parts I, II, and III of the test. There was a statistically significant improvement (Posttest> Pretest; $p< .01$) in Parts II and III of the test (see Table 1).

Part IV, *Questionnaire Concerning Format,* also consisting of four items, measured change in student opinion regarding appropriate format for reporting research findings. Analysis of pretest and posttest results from Part IV showed a desirable change in students' opinions regarding appropriate format for a biological sciences paper (see Table 2). A greater

percentage of the students recognized the "best" response to each of the four questions in the posttest than they did in the pretest.

TABLE 1

Pretest and Posttest Scores: Parts I, II, III

	Pretest	Posttest	*t* value
Part I Correctness (8 points possible)	4.12	4.30	.90
Part II Conciseness (4 points possible)	2.37	3.44	7.27*
Part III Literature Citations (4 points possible)	1.69	2.55	4.089*
Total Parts I, II, III (16 points possible)	8.18	10.30	6.37*
N = 59		* significant at the 1% level	

TABLE 2

Pretest and Posttest Percentages: Part IV

Question Number	Percent of students giving best answer	
	Pretest	Posttest
1	29%	46%
2	35%	46%
3	40%	52%
4	44%	54%

J. Jaap Tuinman

CAN WE REALLY MEASURE COMPREHENSION?

There are very few reading tasks which have a "built-in" check on comprehension. Some exceptions, with the built-in checks indicated in parentheses, are: reading a joke (laughter), reading an application form (correct fill-in), and reading traffic signs (complying with the law, i.e., stopping, turning, etc.). Even in these cases, however, one cannot be sure whether comprehension really did occur. One can laugh at a joke for social reasons, just as one can refuse to laugh because one finds a joke in bad taste. In the latter case, comprehension occurred, but there was no evidence of it.

Generally, however, even these kinds of partly valid direct evidence of comprehension are absent. A teacher who wants to know whether children understand what they read usually has recourse to only two techniques: having the children retell what they read or asking them questions. This article will discuss three concerns regarding the assessment of comprehension through questions: the wording of the questions, the wording of the passages, and the sources of information used by students to answer questions.

Let us agree that the simple statement, "He comprehends this story," is relatively meaningless. One could very well ask: What did he comprehend about it? How much did he comprehend? Did he comprehend everything there is to comprehend in regard to this particular story? (The last question would suggest, of course, that there is a way of defining the boundaries of what can be comprehended in any given story.) These questions, and others, suggest that "comprehension" as such does not exist. Comprehension must always be considered in terms of how it is measured (or demonstrated). Let us consider the following brief passage:

In a provocative article, J. Jaap Tuinman cites pitfalls in assessing the reading comprehension of students. He is associate professor, Institute for Child Study, Indiana University.

> *Passage A:* John's older brother Fred hit the cat with a baseball bat. His sister, however, saw it and told her mother about it.

Let us assume that we want to know whether Jeffrey has understood this passage. Here are the questions we ask:

1. Who hit the cat?
2. Which of the two brothers in the story was the oldest?
3. Did Fred's mother know that he had been mean to the cat?

Jeffrey answers all these questions correctly. We therefore conclude that he has read the passage with 100 percent comprehension. The teacher next door, however, has Gloria read the same passage, but to find out whether Gloria understands it, she asks the following questions:

4. The cat was subjected to an extreme form of maltreatment by whom?
5. What was the age relationship between the two male siblings mentioned in the passage?
6. Was Fred's mother appraised of his callous treatment of the quadruped mentioned in this story?

Poor Gloria manages to miss all three questions, and the teacher therefore concludes that she has read the story with zero comprehension. What does this extreme but telling example demonstrate? To say that something was comprehended is to say that a student performed successfully on a passage-question unit. In this context, though, there is no such thing as comprehension isolated from the probe used to demonstrate that comprehension. The phrase "he understood this passage" is far too absolute. It should be qualified by a reference to level of understanding. One, but not the only, way of differentiating between levels of understanding, then, is by reference to the questions asked to elicit proof of understanding.

One can also consider the above situation in reverse. A simple question may relate to two passages which differ vastly in complexity. For instance, such a question might be: Who kicked the ball? This question could be used to measure understanding of both passages B and C:

> *Passage B:* Two boys played soccer. Hank was the goalie and John tried to get the ball in the net.
>
> *Passage C:* As a result of the forward's sleek maneuver, the defensive player was helpless and the ball wound up in the net.

What is being suggested here is that one can gauge the amount and quality of understanding only in terms of both the passages and the questions. The complexity of either one is not sufficient to characterize the kind of measurement going on; it is the relationship between the two that counts.

Many questions on current comprehension tests are answerable even if one has not read the accompanying paragraphs. However, even when a question cannot be answered without a passage to read, what exactly is needed from the passage to answer the question?

The general issue raised here is that of specifying the source of information for answering a question. Certainly knowing the source of information for one particular question is not half as important as being able to identify various kinds of information commonly used by children when answering comprehension questions. If one can talk about such "kinds" of sources of information, one can also talk about "kinds" of relationships between passages and questions. Knowledge about these relationships is, as has been suggeted above, knowledge about the nature of comprehension.

At a very gross level, we can say that in regard to reading comprehension, there are at least three sources of information usable in answering the questions on these tests: (1) prior knowledge, (2) cues in successive questions, and (3) the passage. Only two of these sources have anything to do with reading the test, and only the last pertains to reading the passage. These sources of information are illustrated respectively in the following passage by questions 1 (prior knowledge), 2 and 3 (cues from other questions), and 4 (the passage):

> *Passage D:* Columbus discovered America. The first thing he said when he set foot ashore was: "My, my, isn't that pretty? I have never seen so many straatstenen!" Then Columbus knelt down and picked up some sand.
>
> 1. Who discovered America?
> 2. What did Columbus say when he set foot ashore?
> 3. When Columbus said: "My, my, isn't that pretty? I have never seen so many straatstenen," where was he?
> 4. What did Columbus pick up?

To further explore the issue of sources of information for answering comprehension questions, it is helpful to distinguish among necessary sources of information, sufficient sources of information, necessary and sufficient sources of information, and (shifting the focus somewhat) functional sources of information.

A necessary source is one without which the question cannot be answered. Clearly, passage D is not a necessary source of information for question 1. However, it *is* a sufficient source. In regard to question 2, both passage D and question 3 constitute sufficient sources of information. By definition, neither one is a necessary and sufficient source. Passage D

can be characterized as a necessary and sufficient source of information for question 4.

The distinctions discussed so far are relevant to how a question *could* be answered. Also of considerable interest is the difficult issue of functional sources of information, that is, the sources students actually employ when answering a specific question. Thus far, "source of information" has been used in reference to some physical segment of text: a paragraph, a sentence, a word. The study of how students answer or could answer questions becomes even more interesting and informative if one focuses on what particular aspect of the segment allows answering the question. Consider the following passage:

> *Passage E:* Offghl ndndnfn nertuo thrye sdtrye doeme. Stry tiirieowk hh sjsjqpw boov ofm tthhe. Whhet isidd hthr?
>
> 1. What kind of doeme did the person in this passage play?
>
> (a) proeltty
> (b) dhture
> (c) thryeyi
> (d) sdtrye

Most readers mark (d) as the answer. How do they arrive at this answer? It is true that the passage, particularly the first sentence, is a necessary and sufficient source of information. Two alternate explanations seem available to further clarify what happened. One can say that the reader simply can match visually the options in the question with elements in the first sentence. Since no similarities other than *sdtrye* exist between question and sentence, he settles on this response. Or one can argue that the reader can conclude from the question that *doeme* is a noun. Using syntactical know-how from his own language, the reader than further concludes that *sdtrye* must be the adjective called for by the words "What kind of" used in the question. The example shows a number of things. First, questions may not be what they seem. How many questions on reading tests could be answered using only syntactical and visual knowledge, excluding semantic information from the passage? Second, the study of sources of information for test items is revealing in regard to the processes usable in answering comprehension questions. The phrase "comprehension as measured in this test" can be given meaning by specifying sources of information usable in answering "this test's" questions. Third, aside from the difficulties of saying anything significant about functional sources of information, identifying the sufficient, the necessary, and the necessary and sufficient sources of information is a demanding task. In regard to passage E, one could have opti-

mized the possibility that syntactic knowledge rather than mere visual matching was used by restating question 1 as follows:

1. What kind of doeme did the person in this story play?
   (a) ndndnfn
   (b) nertuo
   (c) sdtrye
   (d) dhture

Finally, who in the world was this person that liked to play doeme?

Reference

Schlesinger, I. M. and Zehavit Weiser. "Facet Design for Tests of Reading Comprehension," *Reading Research Quarterly* 5 (Summer 1970), pp. 566-80.

NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

We English teachers are too much in awe of the statistician and not respectful enough of our own professional competence.

Sometimes we have even acceded, against our better judgment, to the rescaling of our marks that they might more nearly fit the normal curve. It is time that we stopped this nonsense!

The statistician *assumes* that traits are normally distributed among the population at large. He then adjusts his measures to fit this distribution. The fact that test scores tend to approximate a normal bell-shaped distribution *does not support the assumption.* It only means that the tests have been designed in a manner with produces this distribution. A different way of designing our tests could produce distributions which are rectangular—or even zig-zagged.

Even if we accept the assumption that traits are normally distributed in the total population, this does not mean that they will be normally distributed in our classrooms. In teaching and in grading, there is no substitute for knowing our students.

J. C. Powell
University of Saskatchewan

CHARLES R. DUKE

SPACE AND BODY-ENGLISH: KEYS TO SPEECH EVALUATION

"My dear, in this day a woman never crosses her legs. She sits forward on her chair with her head erect, her hands folded in her lap, and her knees together. On informal occasions, in the privacy of the home, she may cross her ankles in the presence of her father or brothers."

Such Victorian admonitions would make little impression on today's generation, living in the age of the body stocking, the mini-mini, and the see-thru blouse. However, the concerns with posture, movement, and what they suggest to others are still very much with us. Consider the popularity of such books as Julius Fast's *Body Language*. Today, though, these aspects of body movement have become matters of scientific investigation in the field of *kinesics*, the systematic examination of non-lingual body motion in its relation to communication.[1]

The average person is little aware of all this. As adults we have learned to move in conjunction with our minds and our tongues, and we seldom stop to consider that body movement is really a means of expression that can be quite important. Take, for example, the matter of space. Since probably none of us has been taught to look at space as isolated from other associations, actual feelings which are prompted by the handling of space are usually attributed to some other source. Yet in growing up, people learn literally thousands of spatial cues, all of which have their own meaning in their own context. For example, it does not take long for students

1. Julius Fast, *Body Language* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1971), p. 1.

As English teachers, we focus on communication through words, but this author gives specific suggestions for teaching students to consider the movement of speakers as well as their words. Charles Duke is a member of the Department of English, Plymouth State College, Plymouth, New Hampshire.

to become aware of the distribution of space in the classroom. Each student has his desk area which he comes to regard as his own; on occasion he will even fight to protect it. Just as apparent is the area which belongs to the teacher. Normally this area encompasses the front of the classroom and includes a desk and perhaps a chalkboard. A student approaching this area may have a sense of entering a foreign territory. He may not necessarily attribute the feeling to any awareness of spatial rights, but indirectly this is what is happening, for man has developed his territorial sense to an almost unbelievable extent.

Still, we tend to treat space somewhat in the same fashion as sex: it's there but we don't talk about it openly. For some unknown reason our culture has told us to play down or repress the feelings we may have about space. Watch, for example, when someone comes into a person's living room for the first time. More often than not the visitor will select the chair that the host has just been sitting in; then, for some reason, the visitor will sense that this was his host's chair and he will pop up, asking if the chair, indeed, had been the host's. In turn, the host will say quite quickly that it makes no difference; he will sit elsewhere. Yet in the background during all of this action there is a vague sense of irritation on the part of the host, for his personal spatial territory has been invaded.

Although one would not wish to suggest that space and movement within it are totally reliable for the purpose of evaluating an individual and his intentions, certain aspects of communication evaluation do seem to rely rather heavily on just such factors. Particularly important seems to be the handling of space during speech. Not only can a vocal message be qualified by the handling of distance, but the substance of the conversation can often demand special handling of spatial relationships. Edward Hall, a noted anthropologist, made an extensive study of this aspect of communication and discovered that one of the most highly elaborated forms of spatial interaction occurs during speech. He observed people in different countries and noted that the way this interaction was handled varied somewhat from country to country. In *The Silent Language*, he reported on certain guidelines regarding distance and speech which Americans in particular seem to follow:

1. Soft whisper—top secret.	Very close (3 to 6 inches).
2. Audible whisper—very confidential.	Close (8 to 12 inches).
3. Indoors, soft voice; outdoors, full voice—confidential.	Near (12 to 20 inches).

4. Soft voice, low volume—personal subject matter.	Neutral (20 to 36 inches).
5. Full voice—information of nonpersonal nature.	Neutral (4.5 to 5 feet).
6. Full voice with slight overloudness—public information for others.	Public distance (5.5 to 8 feet).
7. Loud voice—talking to a group.	Across the room (8 to 20 feet).
8. Shouting—stretching the limits of distance.	Hailing distance (20 to 24 feet indoors; up to 100 feet outdoors).[2]

Frequently people violate these guidelines unconsciously and then are quite puzzled by the reaction they receive from others. When a person is traveling in a foreign country the reaction may be quite pronounced. In Latin America, for example, people like to remain very close to the person with whom they are speaking. Americans may find this closeness quite offensive and as a result may tend to back away from the speaker; the Latin American pursues, and one can imagine the resulting ludicrous scenes in which communication reaches an impasse.

Students need to be aware of these aspects of spatial relationships which affect communication, and the classroom provides a suitable environment for learning experiences. Use of situations where students are invited to participate, with perhaps a student being primed to act as the Latin American previously mentioned, can serve as a stimulating introduction to the idea of spatial effects in communication. Students should have little difficulty in finding other examples, including the matter of territorial space in the classroom. With a bit of observation in situations outside the classroom, such as subways, large department stores, airport terminals, and on the street, students should begin to see how space plays an important part in evaluating words and actions of a speaker and hence perhaps what he is thinking as he speaks.

Another aspect of the evaluation of speech which is closely linked to that of space is actual body movement, or body English if you will. A political figure gives a speech which is supposed to be reassuring, yet it has the opposite effect. Why? Simply that sentences can be meaningless by themselves if other communicative signs become more eloquent. Trite as it may sound, what people do frequently becomes more important than what they say. Gestures and other body English serve as reinforcement for meaning; without them we are often at a loss as to the exact meaning

2. Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1959), pp. 163-64.

being conveyed. Likewise, when motions seem to contradict speech we are confused and the effectiveness of the communication is lost, for we can no longer accurately evaluate what we are hearing. Students may be aware of these situations in a vague way but often do little about correcting their own problems or those of others. With some guided experiences in the classroom, most students can become much more effective in the use of gestures and body English; this, in turn, makes them more alert to the movements of others.

One of the most obvious methods of heightening awareness of the communicative aspects of body movement is pantomime. To begin, students may be introduced to the use of pantomime in ballet; here we find a universal language that conveys with simplicity and grace both feeling and sense. For instance, to indicate love, the hands are upturned and crossed at the wrists in front of the heart; for death the hands go over the head and then, crossed, plunge downward in a very violent manner. Flight is suggested by a sweeping up-and-down gesture. An individual indicates a question by having his hands upturned in front of him. From examples such as these the student begins to study his own movements and how they do or do not correspond to the intentions behind his speech. Videotape used in this kind of activity offers an excellent way for students to see exactly how accurate they are in communicating intentions through body English. Participation in simple pantomimes, such as picking up certain objects, placing articles in different types of containers, miming certain activities such as chopping wood, starting a car, or packing a suitcase provides helpful experience. The concentration required by both participants and audience points out the need for close attention to the use of body English.

Once students have become comfortable with pantomime, introduce them to improvisations where they must create without lengthy preparation different kinds of characters and situations. Dialogue should be encouraged during these improvisations, and considerable discussion should follow each one, focusing on the accuracy of communication, the believability of the speech and gestures, as well as the appropriate adjustments which were made as characters came to relate to each other in the improvised situation. No attempts should be made to polish the performances; the key, here, is to develop sensitivity in students to the close relationships between body movement, space, and speech.

The ultimate test of the ability of students to evaluate a speaker's intention and meaning comes in oral discussion, for here is a dramatic situation, a kind of oral improvisation, where students must accept and play certain roles. They must evaluate how others in the group are reacting to them

and how they themselves are reacting to others. Students must scan more closely the corresponding body English in order to receive the cues necessary to perform valid evaluations of others' intentions. Panels and talk shows on television are sometimes helpful as illustrations for this kind of interaction.

Every class is a miniature communication system which develops its own signals, its own atmosphere and control of space and movement. If the members pay attention to its dynamics and learn to observe and consider aspects which constitute its operation, they will come to understand a great deal about oral communication.

Paul A. Eschholz
Alfred F. Rosa

EVALUATING SEATING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Classroom seating arrangements, or the proxemic relationships between individual students and the teacher, have long been recognized as important. Bronson Alcott and Maria Montessori,[1] for example, experimented with alternatives to the traditionally regimented classroom seating pattern. More recent studies in this area have incorporated new findings in the fields of kinesics and proxemics, specifically in the study of territoriality and personal space.[2] We felt a need to focus attention on the possible seating arrangements available to a teacher of English who has twenty-five to thirty students per class. Our studies with students' evaluations of various seating arrangements at the University of Vermont have revealed some interesting results.

Students recognize a definite relationship between the type of materials presented in class and the arrangement of the seats; that is, certain seating arrangements make students more receptive to lectures or more active in groups. The teacher, if he takes these insights into account, can then vary the seating arrangements in his classroom to best go with the materials that he is presenting.

1. Alfred F. Rosa, "Alcott and Montessori," *Connecticut Review* 3 (October 1969) pp. 98-103.

2. For a good overview of recent work, see: Robert Sommer, "Small Group Ecology," in *Personal Space: The Behavioral Basis of Design* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969) pp. 58-73; Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966); and "Teacher's Desk," *Psychology Today* 5 (September 1971) p. 12.

Do seating patterns affect the productivity of your students? Paul Eschholz and Alfred Rosa indicate ways of evaluating the seating arrangements in your classroom. They are assistant professors in the Department of English at the University of Vermont.

In eliciting responses from students we asked them to rate arrangements on the basis of comfort, assuming that the most comfortable was the most conducive to learning. Comfort was defined as having two components: physical and psychological. A physically comfortable pattern was defined for the students as an arrangement that enabled them to see and hear the teacher present his materials and permitted a student to see and hear his peers direct questions and comments to the teacher and the group as a whole. A psychologically comfortable pattern was defined as an arrangement which gave a sense of mobility, flexibility, and involvement. Students considered the six arrangements shown in Figure 1.

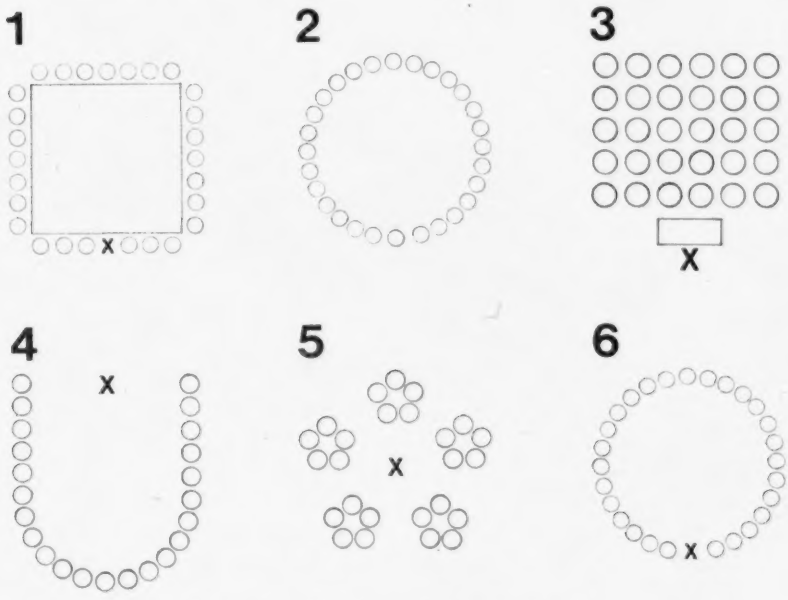

Figure 1. (X = instructor, O = student)

Patterns 4 and 6 were judged to be extremely comfortable. Students particularly liked the circle because all members of the group were equally visible. They felt that this arrangement promoted closeness, informality, equality, and involvement or participation: "the feeling of equality enhances speaking out," "no tables or desks to act as barriers or obstacles," "an atmosphere of mutual observation," "with no visible signs

of superiority a feeling of equality and honesty prevails," and "you must be attentive."

Although students felt that arrangement 4 provided many of the physical benefits exhibited by pattern 6, they did note a striking psychological difference. Most students felt that by separating or isolating the teacher, he was put into a position of authority; he was "dominant," "a focal point," "a moderator," "a guiding force." Few students recognized the teacher to be in what would be considered the "traditional" place.

Pattern 3 received the most negative comments. In general, students disliked looking at the back of anyone's head and felt that it was an imposition to have to turn around to see their peers in the back rows who were making comments. On a more psychological level, students, with the exception of those in the perimeter seating positions, commented on the closeness, or "boxed-in" feeling generated by this pattern: "too regimented," "functional but not pleasant," "too structured, impersonal," "dehumanizing."

Next, we asked students to rate these same six arrangements in terms of work efficiency. The students' responses, interestingly, were inconsistent with earlier judgments. They selected pattern 3 as the most suitable for the large lecture and/or lecture-demonstration class. Because it tends to stifle discussion, students felt that it was functional for the dissemination of large quantities of factual material. Pattern 4 was their second choice. For a discussion class, students found patterns 6 and 4, in that order, most efficient. Students felt that these two configurations fostered openness and the interchange of ideas and encouraged active participation.

The three seating arrangements shown in Figure 2 merit closer examination. In the traditional lecture arrangement, students tend to seat them-

Figure 2. (X = instructor, O = student)

selves according to various criteria. In order to assess why students sit in particular seats, we asked them to rate the numbered positions in arrangement A in order of preference and to explain their choices. We found that the highly motivated, vocal students often chose position 1. These students, despite the exposure of front-row seats, valued more the psychological proximity of the instructor; they "did not want to miss anything." Uninterested, poorly motivated students most often chose seats toward the back of the room, those numbered 4, 5, and 6. This being the case, the teacher who reads apathy, excitement, or enthusiasm on the faces of front-row students in an effort to assess the response to his presentation may not get an accurate reading of the class as a whole. Generally, the students who sit in the mid-region can provide the teacher with more accurate cues as to the effectiveness of his materials and presentation.

The circle, with the instructor as a virtual equal with the students, is conducive to total interaction, students indicated, when "the participants are fully prepared or informed." As equals, students felt that they had to attend and bear their share of the responsibility for the presentation of ideas and material. Although they indicated there was "no need for a designated leader," they surprisingly rejected the circle configuration with no instructor present (arrangement 2 in Figure 1).

Student responses indicate that the seating arrangement most flexible for both students and teacher is the horseshoe arrangement. In terms of a lecture, it has the advantage over the regimented row-by-row pattern because it enables students to see not only the lecturer but also each other. In addition, the teacher using this arrangement can shift from a lecture to a discussion mode with little difficulty. Discussions in a row-by-row setup were felt to be "forced," "awkward," and "unnatural."

The horseshoe pattern is also more adaptable than the circle arrangement. The instructor has more mobility in the former; he can demonstrate at the board with a minimum of disruption, circulate freely, and exert more control over the proceedings. Thus, despite some of its drawbacks, the horseshoe seems to combine some of the best aspects of both the row-by-row and circle patterns.

Our study of students' reactions to various seating arrangements points to some general principles for the teacher: (1) Seating patterns affect individual students and the material being presented; the teacher must be aware of their importance. (2) The effectiveness of certain seating patterns, particularly the three in Figure 2, is a function of the method of presentation. (3) Certain configurations are more flexible than others.

The teacher should avoid habitually committing himself to one pattern. Changing seating patterns is not advocated for its own sake (although this tends to relieve the monotony engendered by rigid seating regulations). The teacher's goal for a given class period—lecture, discussion, lecture-discussion—should determine the seating arrangement for that session. Even within these proven patterns of effectiveness, there is a wide range of variation that is dependent upon the personality of the individual class.

Fred M. Smith
Sam Adams

GRADING AND REPORTING

Because of its impact on the lives of students, parents, administrators, and teachers alike, assigning grades is one of the most crucial and controversial activities of teachers. Numerous procedures for grading and reporting have been promoted in the past. However, no procedure has been completely satisfactory; we are still seeking better ways. Hence it is important that, at intervals, we reexamine the basic assumptions from which grading practices evolve.

Let us assume that grades are basically *achievement reports* to the student, his parents, and others who are personally and professionally concerned with his education. Grades, therefore, should have the same qualities that are necessary in any good report, that is, *clarity* and *honesty*. If the persons to whom a report is made cannot understand it properly, it is obviously not a good report. If the report does not present true and precise information, it is not only unfair, it may be harmful.

The principal aim in grading, then, is to establish a procedure which results in honest and clear reports about student achievement. With this aim in mind, let us examine three traditional methods of deriving grades.

Perhaps the oldest method used is the so-called percentage method, where grades are assigned on the basis of a percentage of the total number of points possible. This procedure is still in widespread use. However, it has serious logical and statistical limitations. For example, if one defines the grade of C as average and also defines it as 80 percent, then the definition is grossly inconsistent in all those score distributions where

---

This paper presents some concepts pertaining to grading and reporting which underlie practical application in classrooms and schools. Fred Smith and Sam Adams are professors of education at Louisiana State University, where Dr. Smith is director of the Bureau of Educational Materials and Research. He also is editor of Measurement News, *a publication of the National Council on Measurement in Education.*

85

80 percent is not the average. Suppose, for example, that the highest (or lowest) score in your class is 80 percent. It is rather illogical to call either the top or bottom score in the class the "average" score. Of course, either of the scores might be average in *some* groups, but you have not measured *all* students. You only have information about your immediate class. Another problem with percentage grading is that of indefensible cut-off points. Suppose, for example, that a range of 90 to 100 percent is designated the A range, and 80 to 89 percent the B range. Then suppose that the distribution of scores looks like this:

```
      x                                                   x
  x   x   x                   x   x   x   x           x   x   x
 80  81  82  83  84  85  86  87  88  89  90  91  92  93  94  95  96  97  98  99  100
```

It is not possible to justify either logically or statistically separating the A's and B's at 90 percent. Obviously, the achievement of those students who made 88 and 89 percent is more similar to that of the students who made 90 to 91 percent than it is to those who made 80 and 82 percent. Conversely, achievement at the 90 and 91 percent level is more similar to that at 88 and 89 percent than it is to that at the 97 and 99 percent level. In this example, one cannot be sure that there is a real difference among the students at the 88 to 91 percent level. Hence they should all be given the same grade. (There *is* a measured difference between that group and each of the others. There are three distinct levels of achievement and therefore three different grades should be assigned.)

A second procedure for assigning grades was developed early in the twentieth century as statistical techniques began to be applied to educational problems. Grading on the basis of the normal curve of probability was heralded as a completely "scientific" approach. In this method, the mean and standard deviation of the score distribution are used to determine grade ranges for a so-called normal distribution of grades. The procedure works out roughly like this: 3.5 percent of the students make an A, 24 percent of the students make a B, 45 percent make a C, 24 percent make a D, and 3.5 percent make an F. Of course, this procedure is equitable and logical only when the score distribution approximates the normal curve. If, for example, the scores are largely grouped at the upper or lower end of the distribution, then the procedure cannot be defended. A strict application of the procedure will again cause the frequent drawing of indefensible cut-off points between grade levels, as with the use of percentage grading.

Another serious problem associated with curve grading is the dilemma faced by the slower students in the class. Regardless of the amount of

progress they may be making, if they are in the lower 3.5 percent they get an F. Conversely, a student at the upper end of the scale may be performing well below his level of capability and still receive his A. The excellent student also may be pressured by other class members "not to set the curve too high."

As the child-development movement grew in the twentieth century, some educators began to be concerned with the excessive stress on competition created by the use of curve grading. They began to reason that it was more important to evaluate a student's achievement in relation to his own ability than it was to evaluate it in relation to the performance of others. This concern led to what is generally called "capacity grading." In a strict application of this procedure, a student is given an A, B, C, D, or F depending on the extent to which he is working up to capacity. However, it soon became evident to some practitioners of this method that it possessed some serious limitations, most of which centered on the question of clarity. For example, consider the child who has made A's and B's on a capacity basis all through elementary school. Then he enters junior high and begins making D's and F's. How do you explain to his parents that the high grades didn't really mean that he was learning anything, but that the elementary teachers just considered him to be incapable of learning very much and gave him an "A for effort"? This method is further complicated (especially in the earlier grades, where it is most often used) by the difficulty of establishing a child's true ability.

From the above discussion, it may be seen that an exclusive application of any one of these three methods would have serious limitations. We need a method of grading that will result in a clear and truthful indicator of just what a student has achieved. We need also to answer the question, Is the student learning what he is supposed to learn at his age level? Furthermore, we need to utilize a method which can be defended both logically and statistically.

The most defensible method of assigning grades on a single source of achievement information (test paper, report, theme, etc.) is to score each paper according to some key of correctness and incorrectness, rank the scores from highest to lowest, and assign grades according to the different achievement levels which are revealed. In the example used for the discussion of percentage grading, it is obvious that there are three distinct levels of achievement. There is a high group, a middle or average group, and a low group. A distribution will not usually be as neatly grouped as this one; however, if the teacher has done a good job of testing and scoring, achievement level groups will usually be identifiable. In this procedure, there is no preset number or percentage of each grade to be

given. The students are not prejudged, but are evaluated only after the facts are in. However, the exercise of good judgment is required.

Assigning grades to one paper (test, theme, report) is one kind of activity; combining them to form a summary grade for a grading period is another. How do you combine several different grades from different sources? One common method is to assign each letter grade a point value and simply average them. The problem this presents, however, is that a grade from a minor source may count just as much as or more than a grade from a major test or theme. Some people attempt to remedy this by multiplying the important grades by two or some other factor. It is difficult, however, to determine just what factor to use; the precise weighting of scores can become a very involved statistical procedure.

A simple way of combining grades that is usually equitable is to record *scores* rather than grades. Since the more important papers and tests are usually longer than less important ones, all sources usually will contribute proportionately to the student's total number of points for the period. After a total score is obtained for each student, the teacher should then arrange the scores in a distribution, as illustrated earlier, and assign grades according to the levels of achievement revealed.

An additional problem in summarizing and reporting grades is that of combining different kinds of information into one grade. A report that simply says "English—D" actually reveals very little. Apparently the student is not performing well in English, but *what* or *where* is his deficiency? Is it poor grammar, spelling, sentence construction, reading, writing style, vocabulary, or what? The problem is further complicated if the school also includes in this single symbol such things as classroom conduct or effort. In this case, the principles of honesty and clarity both may be violated. When many different factors are included under one symbol, its meaning becomes confused. The use of S and U, which was advocated at one time, only makes the situation worse. The aim is clear communication, and if one cannot communicate with five symbols, one certainly cannot communicate with two. Written reports and parent-teacher conferences have been introduced in an attempt to overcome this problem, but these require too much time to be used on a continuing basis.

A reporting procedure which provides structure, is fairly easy to use, and is clearer than the single grade is the check-list report. In this procedure, all major aspects of course achievement are printed on the report form. The teacher then reports on the student's achievement in each major area. Such things as classroom conduct, effort, and attitude may also be listed if reports on these attributes are desired. Of course, before the

check-list report is constructed, teachers must agree on what the major aspects of achievement are for each grade level.

Regardless of the particular form used, the principles of clarity and honesty are paramount in assessing the quality of any grading and reporting system.

EVALUATING STUDENT COMPOSITION

I used to teach a course in which students revised their paragraphs according to a correction chart which I explained to them at the start of the semester. As time went on I became so puzzled at how well they were able to correct their mistakes that I tried an experiment. About six weeks into the course I began to phase out the marginal symbols, and by the end I was doing no more than underlining or bracketing errors and putting X's in the margins. Students were still able to revise with about 80 percent accuracy.

David B. Jacobson
Contra Costa College, California

C. M. LINDVALL

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Cronbach[1] and many other persons who have considered the purposes to be served by educational evaluation have made the point that evaluation can make its most important contribution when it is used as a basis for studying and improving a program in the course of development. Evaluation in this role is now commonly referred to as *formative evaluation.*[2] Stufflebeam[3] and Stake[4] have suggested models to be employed for insuring that evaluation does take place at every step in the development or revision of an educational program. An effort to apply such a systematic procedure for formative evaluation to the development of a rather comprehensive instructional system, namely Individually Prescribed Instruction (IPI), has been described by Lindvall and Cox.[5] The procedure followed in this latter effort outlined the development process in terms of four major steps: (1) defining the goals to be achieved, (2) outlining the plan for achieving the goals, (3) studying the operation when the plan was implemented, and (4) assessing the degree to which the operating program achieved the desired goals. Various types of evaluation were employed during each of these stages to provide feedback for improving the quality of all elements in the total program.

1. Cronbach, L.J. "Course Improvement through Evaluarion." *Teachers College Record* 64 (May 1963).
2. Scriven, M. "The Methodology of Evaluation." *Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation, No. 1.* Chicago: Rand McNally, 1967.
3. Stufflebeam, D.L. *Evaluation as Enlightenment for Decision-Making.* Columbus: Evaluation Center, Ohio State University, 1968.
4. Stake, R.E. "The Countenance of Educational Evaluation." *Teachers College Record* 68 (April 1967).
5. Lindvall, C.M. and R.C. Cox. *Evaluation as a Tool in Curriculum Development: The IPI Evaluation Program, No. 5.* Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970.

Greater integration of evaluation in research and development activities will enhance education. C.M. Lindvall is affiliated with the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh.

The overall result of utilizing such a procedure is a close integration of development and evaluation activities. At some points this integration is so complete that development and evaluation activities become virtually indistinguishable. For the person responsible for the development effort, this degree of integration can be highly supportive and desirable. During the past several months, I have seen my own interests and responsibilities shift, somewhat progressively, from those of an evaluator to those of a developer. (Some persons have suggested that this is a rather natural evolutionary transition in the career of a "formative evaluator.")

The systematic application of formative evaluation to a well-conceived program of development can result in the latter becoming a most useful and respectable form of research. Some readers may question why this would be desirable. There are at least two answers. One is that the large body of general procedures and specific techniques used by the researcher offers an important reservoir of tools that are of potential use to the developer. Perhaps this potential can best be realized if the parallel nature of research and development is clearly recognized. A second answer is that research which is an integral part of a development process would have immediate practical applications. There would be no need to raise the question as to the implications of the research for educational practice. What is being suggested, then, is that an integration of research and development should result in development activities that are more effective and in research that is highly relevant to the needs of teachers and administrators.

ROBERT J. STARR

HOW TO WRITE AND EVALUATE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

The amount of time spent in correcting such subjective measurements as the essay test should induce teachers, whenever appropriate, to use objective tests. Here are some tips on how to make, evaluate, and update such tests.

Collect all material used in teaching-learning to serve as a basis for the test questions. Write each test question on a 5 × 8 card. Indicate the source of the question on the bottom of the card and write the letter of the correct answer on the reverse side. Begin a test with three to five fairly simple questions and number these immediately.

Keep a list indicating the number of times each letter is the correct answer, so that in a fifty-question test with five answer positions, all positions are used between nine and eleven times.

Now that you have written at least fifty questions on cards and have insured that each position is used about the same number of times, you are ready to reproduce the test. But wait!

Have a colleague look over each question and make suggestions. Some will need to be modified and others might need to be dropped. Following the colleague's advice, rework any questionable items. Remember that the questions should reflect the emphasis put on various parts of the course. Take the three to five easy questions which you have already numbered and shuffle the remaining cards in order to randomize the positions of the answer choices. Number the remaining cards and ask a teacher aide to type them and construct an answer sheet. Don't forget to write clear directions for the students.

Once the test has been given, ask a teacher aide or student to subject each test question to this analysis for difficulty and discrimination. Order

---

Tips on developing multiple-choice questions are given by Robert Starr, assistant professor of education, University of Missouri at St. Louis.

the papers from the highest to the lowest score and count off those with the ten highest scores (the top papers). Using two unused answer sheets put *top* across the top of one sheet and *bottom* across the top of the second. Your work sheet for the ten top papers will probably look like this:

Ten Top Papers

1.	a	b	c	d	e
2.	a	b	c	d	e
3.	a	b	c	d	e

Determine how many among the top ten papers answered question 1 correctly and place this number beside the appropriate position on the worksheet. Suppose that in question 1 position C is the correct answer and that seven people of the top ten got this correct; your worksheet then reads:

Ten Top Papers

1.	a	b	c–7	d	e

Carry out this procedure for all fifty questions; that is, write down how many of the top ten papers got each item correct. Then do the same for the ten bottom tests.

Suppose that seven of the bottom papers also answered question 1 correctly. To determine the difficulty of the question, add the number of times each question was answered correctly on the top and bottom tests. Seven plus seven gives an index of fourteen for question one. An index between seven and seventeen is desirable; thus, question one is of proper difficulty.

To find how well each question discriminates between the more able and less able students, subtract the number of times each question was answered correctly on the bottom tests from the number of times each was correct on the top tests. An index of three or above is acceptable. Question one results in an index of zero; thus this question does not discriminate between top and bottom scores. Compute the discrimination index of each test question, then place the index on the back of each test card along with the index of difficulty and the date the test was administered. Use only those test questions that meet the desired range of difficulty and discrimination.

References

Bloom, Benjamin S., et. al. *Handbook on Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning.* St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1971.

Bloom, Benjamin S., ed. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain.* New York: David McKay Co., 1956.

Educational Testing Service. *Making Your Own Tests.* Princeton, New Jersey.
Krathwohl, David R., et. al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook II: Affective Domain.* New York: David McKay Co., 1964.

SHOW OF EXCELLENCE

Students may not know whether they themselves should get A's, but they know when others should. I find that they recognize both good writing and dedication in others' work, as well as the other values we give A's for. I now assign A's when at the end of the term, the class, myself included, recognizes a "show of excellence."

John Warnock
University of Wyoming

Barbara A. Welch

SHOULD ENGLISH TEACHERS USE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS?

For the teacher of English, fair grades, like clear standards and just tests, are not easy to come by. For one reason, our objectives differ, depending on the course and the level. For another, tests that most of us would consider satisfactory gauges of performance are harder to construct in some areas than in others. It is easier, for example, to find acceptable tests for reading comprehension than for the clear expression of that comprehension. It is also easier to test satisfactorily a student's vocabulary than his thoughts and feelings about word use.

In short, "multiple-choice" tests, and their ilk, have some use in some English classes, but for the most part such tests are pointless or insulting. In the first place, we do not deal much with "facts," the knowledge of which is most reliably measured in such tests. "Facts" in an English class are, by and large, merely items to which people (authors, teachers, students) respond. Further, so-called objective tests force students into accepting our phrasing and therefore our view (or worse, the phrasing and view of a publisher's clerk) of what the "answer" *must* be. If the question seeks merely to find the temperature at which water will boil, certain conditions prevailing, then the answer is legitimately imposed. But English teachers, and most scientists for that matter, don't deal most of the time in neat little topics of this sort. Rather, we deal in words—expressions of thoughts, feelings, experiences, and shades of meaning. Our "material" is in books and on television, in the head and heart, on the lips and at the fingertips. Our material is slippery stuff; and slippery stuff is hard to test.

Even reading and listening comprehension are time taking and difficult to test. I have had high school and college students who absorbed

---

Here is a critical view of multiple-choice tests. Barbara Welch is a member of the English Department, Westfield State College, Massachusetts.

95.

most of the "factual" matter in an essay or television news program, for example, but showed no awareness of the value judgments implied in the editing of details or the emphasis given certain details or the connotative coloring of words. The students failed, that is, to understand both the material and what had just been done to them. Yet "done" it was. Their summaries showed that the implied value judgments in great part determined what they saw and heard.

If students are having difficulty understanding written and oral material, it does not necessarily follow, of course, that they cannot clearly express their responses to the experiences they do understand. Through essays, short or long, test their ability to analyze and express what they read and hear and see of good sense and bad sense. Grade them as honestly as you can and explain the logical reasons for the grade. (If your reasons are merely emotional or political, you'll see that quickly enough and so will they.) Most students will understand the grade. And most will accept it—including, of course, a failing grade—once they know from experience that you both know how and will try to help them better it.

CLEARLY STATED AFFECTIVE GOALS

Nothing will be more effective in humanizing education than clearly stated affective goals that have been derived from the assessed needs of a community.

Joseph L. Daly
Colorado State University

Betty Barbara Sipe

STUDENTS WRITE THEIR OWN QUESTIONS FOR ESSAYS

An essay examination of the student's own creation gives each young person an opportunity to participate creatively in the evaluating procedure and to enjoy a sense of responsibility and independence.

Students pose questions about the unit of literary study completed immediately preceding the days of evaluation and submit these questions to the teacher for suggestions or revisions. Each student then does research on his question (or questions) during one class period, submitting his notes at the end of the class hour.

These notes are returned on the day the students write essays in response to their own questions.

Before the students write their papers, they are reacquainted with the evaluative criteria: (1) precise statement of focal point for discussion, (2) orderly pattern of development leading to logical conclusion, (3) skillful substantiation of each step in the development, (4) good transitions, and (5) perceptive analysis of own question. Together the students and teacher have determined the weight of each of these criteria; others, like mechanics and spelling, tend to be added.

Students react positively to the idea of responding to their own questions, and it is enjoyable reading a variety of essays on a multiplicity of topics.

Betty Barbara Sipe describes steps for involving students in writing and responding to their own essay questions. She teaches at Mount Lebanon High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

97

Albert H. Koppenhaver

INDIVIDUALIZED FINAL EXAMS

When it comes time for final exams, do you ever feel just plain lousy? Having succumbed to this malady myself, I decided it was time to add a dash of effervescence to the venerable ritual.

For years I had been preaching the virtues of individualized instruction to my students. I'm sure some, if not many, had become disciples of the approach. My own teaching style was molded around the principles of individualization, but my final exams always suffered from the blight of traditionalism.

"Be consistent," pleaded my inner self, "and individualize your final exams as well as your instruction." "Preposterous," the rational Me retorted.

Fortunately, schools close at Christmas time, and so I packed my educational paraphernalia into several cardboard boxes, left school, and trudged home to continue laboring on my school work. After two midnight-oil sessions the results began to show. "It can be done. Individualized finals can be a reality," my rational self noted. "I told you so," grumbled the mollified conscience of my inner self.

My plan was to develop two essay questions for each student in my graduate class, "Reading Curriculum and Supervision." A total of thirty questions had to be written. Each set of questions focused on aspects of research related to investigations which had been done individually by the students. It was not difficult to develop questions as I had copies of each student's research proposal, a written synopsis of his report, as well as notes taken during each oral presentation. My primary concern was to move student thinking from the cognitive to the upper levels of the affective domain.

In this humorous article, Albert Koppenhaver tells how he personalized his final examinations. He is assistant professor of elementary education at California State University, Long Beach.

The examination questions were posed at the end of a personalized scenario, a sample of which follows:

> The XYZ School District has selected you to serve in the newly created position of Reading Consultant. Your work consists mainly of being available to assist teachers of reading who have not been especially successful. The district philosophy is that of "salvaging" rather than firing teachers of this caliber. Therefore, you are instructed to be helpful, constructive, and positive in your approach. Remember, you are attempting to change teaching behaviors.
>
> Your first assignment directs you to the classroom of Mr. Incon Gruity, a recent graduate of Mental Discipline University. Your observation of his reading lessons reveals that he makes no allowance for individual differences among pupils. His teaching methods and materials of instruction severely cramp the learning of his capable students and are unattainable to the slower achievers. Your task is to: (1) write a memo explaining to Mr. Gruity the value of and need for using materials and instructional techniques which relate to the individual capabilities of pupils in his reading class and (2) identify the steps that you would suggest to Mr. Gruity so that he will develop a reading program which relates to the individual capabilities of pupils in his class.

Similar scenarios took my students into the classrooms of Mr. Ichabod Crane, Mr. Sam Socrates, Mr. John Comenius (a direct descendant of the immortal), Mr. Vague and Mr. Obscure (a team-teaching duo), Mr. Hap Hazard, and many others.

My pixilation had been previously explained to the students whose reactions, quite frankly, varied in degrees as complete as the colors of the spectrum.

The exams were administered along with a KISS (Koppenhaver Informal Student Sampling). The KISS was an attempt to survey reactions to the exam and consisted of three statements, each of which required a check to be placed on a five-point rating scale which ranged from very positive to very negative.

KISS is not to be confused with any formal measurement instrument, though it does smack with implications close to the hearts of formalists. The results of KISS are given in the table below.

Since a 5 would be perfect rating and a 4 would also indicate a positive attitude, it was hoped that all student responses would be between 4 and 5. As can be seen, the individual and average reactions by students were approvingly high.

Additionally, the KISS contained three optional, open-ended statements. Not all the students responded to the optional portion of the KISS, and all responses which were received are presented below.

Student Reaction to an Individualized Final Examination in a Graduate College Course (N = 15)

(Point Value)		Number of Responses		
		I thought this was a good final exam	The situations posed for me were appropriate	I would rather take this kind of final exam than a "typical" college final exam.
Strongly agree	*(5)*	9 *(45)*	7 *(35)*	14 *(70)*
Agree	*(4)*	5 *(20)*	5 *(20)*	1 *(4)*
Neutral	*(3)*	1 *(3)*	2 *(6)*	
Disagree	*(2)*		1 *(2)*	
Strongly Disagree	*(1)*			
(Total points)		*(68)*	*(63)*	*(74)*
Average		4.53	4.20	4.93
			4.56 *(205)*	

(1) The thing I liked best about this final exam was:
"The questions were appropriate to the situations actually encountered by a reading supervisor."
"The pertinence of questions to my current situation."
"The uniqueness of the exam."
"It posed practical situations we may face and asked for realistic answers. It was not a regurgitating type exam, as *most* are!!"
"It was individualized."

(2) The thing I disliked most about this final exam was:
"I would like to have had more time."
"One of my situations was too difficult."

10.0

"One of my questions was vague."
"Not sure my answer was adequate."
"The word *examination*."
"Too logical—it is hard to convince other people to change their behavior."

(3) Other feelings about this final which I have include the following:
"I felt I did not have to write a book."
"This is the first worthwhile education class I have had in many years."
"I think it was an exceptional idea and very enjoyable."
"Interesting situations."
"Very fair—individualizing on the college level."

You are free to draw your own conclusions to this pedagogical effort. Frankly, the experience was so enlightening to me, I shall continue the practice.

EVALUATION IN CONFERENCE

Faculty members use the time normally allocated for final exams to assess the grade of each student enrolled in the introductory, interdisciplinary communications course. Teaching personnel from each department meet in conferences, with members of the English Department serving as chairmen. At these times the work of each student—and the course itself—is evaluated.

Carl W. King
Northeast Louisiana University

Victor A. Doyno

ENGLISH COURSE EVALUATION

I would like to share with other teachers some of the techniques I've used for evaluating my own classroom teaching. During each semester, after about five weeks of classes, I ask the students to take out a piece of paper. The students immediately expect a pop quiz, and the resulting rush of adrenaline helps prepare them to do an unexpected task.

Then I ask the students to evaluate the course—anonymously—responding to the numerous questions supplied. Usually I begin with questions about neutral areas as a warm-up:

What do you think about the texts?
Any comment about the balance between lecture and discussion?
What should get more emphasis or attention?
What could be done to improve the course?
What is your attitude toward digressions?
Do you think class questions are handled thoroughly? fairly?
Can you follow the lectures?
Do you wish more attention to historical backgrounds or textual analysis?
What would you say about the course to a friend? an enemy?
Do you consider the teacher available? responsible? in command of the material? open to suggestions?
What is your own attitude toward the course?

At the end of the semester, I ask a few more questions, to be collected by a student and kept until grades are returned. This evaluation begins with a statement that I'm likely to teach this or a similar course again and that I'd like to improve it:

What should be changed?
What should remain pretty much as it was this semester?
Did the course meet your expectations?

Victor Doyno tells how he engages his students in evaluating his English course. He is associate professor of English at the State University of New York, Buffalo.

Did it affect your mind?
What advice would you give a student registering for this course?

These final evaluations are anonymous (should be the student ever wish to take another course from me) and signed only if the student so wishes.

Since many teachers dislike the thought of such questions, I would like to emphasize the advantages of this method. Perhaps most important, the asking for such evaluations is a demonstration of trust, a creation of mutual commitment to the course. Since the questions are primarily directed toward evaluation of the course rather than the teacher, the course becomes a shared responsibility. Critical thinking is extended to a normally taboo area—teaching.

Obviously, it is helpful to have class suggestions while the semester is still in process, so that the course emphasis can be changed if necessary. A parallel advantage is that, at the end of the semester, the teacher has something concrete that endures rather than merely the familiar feelings of loss and relief when turning in grades. The evaluations can, of course, be read over and carefully considered. The students have had the freedom to control the emphasis of their responses, and the teacher can consider the style as well as the substance of the individual comments. The evaluations are obviously quite helpful while preparing to reteach a course, and they are also solid written evidence, as opposed to the usual gossip and hearsay, of teaching capability for tenure and promotion.

Our university macrosystems occasionally have a compulsion to use machine-graded forms which fit and distort every course on campus, forms which frequently pose inappropriate questions and therefore force meaningless answers. And many teachers have had unsatisfactory experiences with such questionnaires. Part of our humanness can be preserved by creating a system of course evaluations that is flexible, that is responsive to differences, and that must be read. Indeed, I use different questions for an epic course, a Chaucer class, or a cinema group. If a hostile critic would say that my technique is not "scientific," I would reply that with anonymity the students are certainly capable of piercing a biased self-serving question.

My students have treated this responsibility with seriousness, with intelligence and charity; they have helped improve my classroom teaching.

WINIFRED L. FRAZER

THE TEACHER'S EGO OR WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT STUDENT EVALUATION?

How much battering can the teacher's ego take? How many "frank" personal comments can he read without quailing? Do ten moderately flattering remarks compensate for one sharp barb?

The University of Florida is now using the Michigan State Student Instructional Rating Report in many of its colleges, and the major professional colleges are using a similar form, modified to suit their purposes. The statistical part of all the evaluations is impersonal, but not so the comments of the students, which, although anonymous, go directly in their own handwriting to each individual instructor. Without intending to condemn or praise, I would point out that the personal commentary part of the form, which is rightly not read by administrators or even clerks, may be damaging to the ego of the instructor, who *does* read it.

He may have handy at least six or eight rationalizations for not being pained by: "This great instructor never missed a class—unfortunately." First, the student is probably not mature enough to know what should be covered in the course. Second, he is probably a poor student, disgruntled at the grades he has been receiving. Third, even if he liked the course, he couldn't resist his own cleverness in shaking up the instructor by his

---

Students have had many years to learn how to cope with teacher comments about their skills in writing and other areas of English. But the practice of formally evaluating teachers is still relatively new, and the evaluative student comments on anonymous opinionnaires may bruise many an English teacher's ego. Winifred Frazer takes us on a fanciful tour of the thought processes of an English teacher reading her students' comments. She is associate professor of English, University of Florida, Gainesville.

surprise ending. Fourth, he is likely a class cutter who really would rather loaf than attend any class. Fifth, he has probably been spoiled by haphazard instructors who called in sick every few days and neglected the course. Sixth (but not last), he probably resents having to fulfill the requirement of taking this particular course. But necessary as these rationalizations may be, they never quite ease the instructor's lurking disappointment that one student thought his absence more beneficial than his presence.

The statistical part of the evaluation form is very "ify," and hence requires almost no rationalization to become acceptable. If the number of students in a class is small, the statistics hardly register a fair judgment of the instructor. If the class is one required of all, the disgruntled students affect the ratings adversely. If the statistics show lack of strong agreement on any matter, it may be that many students registered for a course for which they were ill-fitted. If the standard deviation on a particular set of questions is large, the answers probably have little validity because of the extremes. (If one is not grounded in the basis of statistical principles, he may wonder: standard deviation from what?) If he does not carefully note whether "strong agreement" is numbered one or five, he may expect that a high rating is always better than a low. Even if he knows that "strong disagreement" is five, he may be completely unaware that in view of the negative slant of some questions, he would be better off with a high score. Even if the statistical results are posted on a bulletin board, as they were for one college, the eye can travel across yards of individual forms without the mind's reaching any conclusions about the worth of any individual instructor. There are so many "ifs" that the average instructor, familiar with statistics or not, can toss off the results of this part of the evaluation form with a shrug meaning "more computer-age manipulation."

But not so the comments! For example, what a compliment to be told: "This instructor is a beautiful, beautiful person. . . ." Knowing the use of this adjective among young people, it makes one's heart swell to think he has so affected a young mind by the pure spirituality of his very being. What chagrin, however, to find the comment completed by: ". . . but he should be teaching elsewhere." Are there any number of favorable statistics which can recompense the instructor for this blow to the ego? The following is easier to take: "This is the worst course I ever had, due mainly to the instructor." At least the writer shows himself to be dogmatic and hence obviously unreliable, and since he does not like the course material, he undoubtedly would not like any instructor who taught it. But what about the student who merely wishes the instructor would miss

class? What about the one who thinks the instructor is great but uneducated?

What must the professor's reaction be to: "This instructor has his own idiosynchronic approach"? Why doesn't the student explain himself further? Does he like the individualism of the teacher or does this word connote *idiocy* and *chronic* disease? And what about: "This course has taken me back ten years"? Does the student mean it has *set* him back ten years, in which case the professor must admit to being a dismal failure, or does he mean he has enjoyed recalling happy younger days, in which case the forward-looking intent of the course has hardly been achieved, or does he mean it was like a course from elementary school, in which case the instructor must submit to despair? And here's another he must mull over: "The instructor has a vast knowledge and knows his material extremely well. . . ." Ah, to be given credit for all those years of graduate school and teaching—only to be let down by: ". . . but he teaches *below* the level of the class."

Hang those who are out to boost their own importance by shooting down the teacher, but harder to hang is the student who wishes to be kind: "This course was pretty good because the instructor picked a good reading list, so it did not matter if he was not a very good teacher."

What can be said of the forms with *nothing whatsoever* written on the eighteen lines provided for under "Comments Concerning the Instructor or the Course"? It wouldn't take much effort or ink for any student to write: "Good course!" with a large exclamation mark. Even "Lousy course!" with a smaller exclamation mark might be preferable to complete indifference.

But with no opportunity to reply to favorable and unfavorable comments (or to the lack of them), the professor must cherish the replies he understands and likes, hastily throw in the waste basket those which disturb him, and pin upon his wall, in hopes of finding some interpretation, those like the following:

> A young student
> came upon another student
> standing on a bridge.
> The latter asked
> the wandering student
> where he was going.
> The former replied,
> "I am going to buy some vegetables."

Perhaps the author of this statement wished to illustrate the generation gap, or the foolishness of the whole rating system of teachers by students

and students by teachers, or perhaps that the course simply made no sense at all to him. Perhaps pot has unhinged his reasoning faculties, or, heaven forbid, there is a coded message here which the instructor is too dense to read, or even worse, some Freudian implication in "bridge" and "vegetables" which he is too puritanical to countenance.

Perhaps the professor will get hardened through the years to the "Personal Comments" section of the evaluations, or perhaps he will learn to discard them like junk mail without reading them, or perhaps he will go into real estate or insurance, or possibly some clever one will devise a way to get super-favorable ratings from all students. In any case, he will probably learn something of the battering which the student's ego takes from the moment he gets that first C— on an obviously A paper.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX
OF NCTE POLICY STATEMENTS, RESOLUTIONS, AND SENSE-OF-THE-HOUSE MOTIONS RELATING TO EVALUATION

Most of the effort of professional associations like NCTE is devoted to providing a forum for discussion of many sides of ideas and issues. But each year at the time of the annual convention, certain issues appear to demand special attention and require, further, that the Council take a stand.

There are three forms that such statements of position take: (1) *Policy Statements*, developed by committees, honed to consensus through extensive criticism, revision, and debate, and passed by the Board of Directors; (2) *Resolutions*, shaped with less formality and debated briefly at the Annual Business Meeting, but uttered still with feeling and, often, with considerable impact; and (3) *Sense-of-the-House Motions*, developed on the spot at convention and, though lacking constitutional validity, often sources of extensive activity in ensuing months and years.

The following collection of policy statements, resolutions, and sense-of-the-house motions is presented to acquaint the reader with the concerns of the members about measurement, assessment, and evaluation issues during the past decade.

POLICY ON GRADING

Introduction

At the Annual Business Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, two sense-of-the-house motions were presented and passed: That failing grades be eliminated as a permanent part of the record in all English and Language Arts courses at all educational levels; and that the NCTE Executive Committee appoint a committee to develop a position statement regarding grades for English courses at all educational levels, such statement to be presented as a resolution to the 1971 convention of NCTE in Las Vegas.

The following members served on an ad hoc committee to draft the position statement: Jean Anderson, Burlingame High School, California; Richard Friederich, Forest Park Community College, St. Louis, Missouri; Barbara Klinefelter, University of Nevada at Las Vegas; Barrett Mandel, Douglass College, Rutgers University; and Thelma Dickey Worthen, Stone Valley Intermediate School, Alamo, California. Meeting with members of the committee was Robert F. Hogan, Executive Secretary of NCTE.

The report of the committee, which now has the endorsement of the three NCTE Section Committees and the Executive Committee, follows.

Background

The Goals of English Teaching

The skills of language—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—are essential for individual participation in society and for the maintenance of society. Through using and expanding these skills, moreover, the student becomes more sharply aware of his universe, of himself, and of the relationship between the two.

The teacher of any discipline hopes his students will be able to use their training to advantage in their work, their leisure, and their social interactions. But surely another goal also guides the teacher of language and literature—the desire to help students toward a higher awareness. This awareness is the frightening and truly liberating knowledge that man makes his world with words, that words let him know what he sees, and that the more he sees the more there is.

Note to the Reader: Of the following, only the "Statement of Policy" on page 108 was fully discussed and approved by the Board of Directors of NCTE at the Sixty-First Annual Meeting, 1971. Remaining pages are meant to inform readers of the development of the policy and of additional ideas discussed by the NCTE Ad Hoc Committee on Grading, chaired by Barrett Mandel, which prepared the proposal.

The study of literature and language can be joyous in and of itself. Writing a poem or reading one, moreover, is an educative experience when it allows one suddenly to see what was invisible before—indeed, not even there. To see the world in a grain of sand one must know that without seeing and naming there is no sand and no world. The study of literature and language can help one become a seeing human being—open to possibilities, responsive to experience, intellectually and emotionally supple.

Grading in English

Viewed in this light, the subject of our instruction and the skills it develops are essential to life and to living. If this is really what we have to offer our students, it seems remarkable that we should contrive a system of extrinsic rewards and penalties to reinforce successful students and to punish those who refuse to learn what experience tells us they need and want to know. And yet, remarkable as it is, we find that we have done just that.

Teachers of literature and language at all levels express increasing concern about grading practices and the effects of grades. We find evidence of this concern in the pages of our journals and monographs, in speeches at conventions and conferences, in resolutions and other motions at our business meetings. A few institutions, or departments within institutions, have converted in part to a Pass/Fail system, which attacks only part of the problem. Far smaller is the number of institutions or departments which have adopted a recording system of *Pass* or "no entry." Ironically, those who select students for admission to such curriculums rely on reports of previous competitive grades to identify students who show promise of success in these noncompetitive programs of study.

Among the problems that vex the profession are these:

. . . that when competition for grades is very keen, grades themselves—rather than learning—become the goal;

. . . that the same essay, submitted to a varied panel of teachers, can elicit a variety of grades;

. . . that so-called "objective tests" may actually be objective only in that separate readers grading the same test and using the same key will arrive at the same raw score. Decisions about what knowledge or skills to measure, about what forms of questions to use, and about how to weigh the importance of the separate items in a test are still left to the teacher's subjective judgment;

. . . that the fixed and sometimes arbitrary calendar duration of terms, quarters, trimesters, and the like fails to take into account different learning rates among students and penalizes those who, if they had more time, would offer the necessary evidence of satisfactory performance;

. . . that a beneficial effect of classroom experience is that a student may learn at any one stage his limits as well as his talents, but this benefit is undermined if the discovery of such limits at any one stage is to haunt the student through the rest of his academic life;

. . . that failure, which can stem in part from unrealistic standards or inappropriate learning materials, is now a burden borne solely by the student;

. . . that the present system of permanently recording and passing on information about student achievement means that the burden of an "F" is a permanent burden.

Against the background of these concerns, one might expect in what follows a manifesto against all grading, rather than a modest and an intermediate proposal. Yet the outline for action here constitutes no wholesale effort to reach an ideal in one leap, but only a first step toward that ideal—a system resting not on external grades, but on student satisfaction based upon self-evaluation. Unless we had a completely workable alternate structure for evaluation, a curriculum geared to that structure, and a constituency ready to accept both, just to eliminate completely the grading system we now have would lead to chaos.

The basic structure of rewards and incentives for student achievement has long rested upon a grading system. To abandon all grades suddenly would be to eliminate the major stimulus that many students have been conditioned to respond to and the one report on student achievement that many parents say they understand. Moreover, admission to selective colleges, to graduate schools, to professional schools, and to some occupations now rests in part on reports of student grades, as do progression from grade to grade and transition from school to school. To abandon all grades at this point could limit such decisions to the results of standardized tests or to random selection.

This first step rises from the cause of our deepest concern: the fact that a recorded failure on permanent and cumulative records may follow the student throughout his academic life and into his occupation. The experience of failure is often traumatic enough without adding to it the penalty of a permanent public recording of it, since punitive grades are not recognized as hindering rather than advancing the intellectual development of the student, since it is pointless for a school or university to keep a record of failures, and since at the end of any stage of education our interest should be in what our students can do rather than what they cannot.

Statement of Policy

The Board of Directors of the National Council of Teachers of English adopts the following five propositions as statements of policy and urges that NCTE seek means to put these statements of policy into action:

1. Reporting of a child's progress in the early years should be done through methods other than the assignment of a letter or numerical grade. Rather, the reporting of a child's progress should be through regular conferences based upon anecdotal records, comparative samples of a child's own work, the teacher's estimates of the child's growth in skills and his growth toward achieving other goals that the community and the school might have set.
2. After the early years, at all educational levels, only passing grades (Pass or A-B-C or any other symbols distinguishing levels of passing performance) should be recorded on a student's permanent record.
3. If a student has progressed in a course, but has not completed it when the calendar indicates the term is over, he may either withdraw without penalty or request a temporary mark of incomplete, subject to his later completing the work by a date agreed upon by the student and the instructor.
4. An instructor should not be required to record grades A-B-C or any other symbols distinguishing levels of passing performance if the course

has been taken by the student on a Pass basis.

5. The institution will maintain no second set of books, no secret file in which instructors report the "actual" performance of the students in terms of symbols other than Pass or A-B-C or any other symbols distinguishing levels of passing performance.

Implications

If this statement of policy is adopted it implies the following: particularly during the early years, stress will be on personal and social growth, on exploring ways of learning, and on developing study habits; evaluation will concern itself with identifying and removing barriers to learning and with helping the child discover next steps. *Pass* is not to be construed as a mark lower than C, though minimally acceptable on a four-point scale, but as an alternative to the three-point scale, A-B-C; where compulsory daily attendance is not required by law, the student has the option of withdrawing at any time from a course without penalty; the permanent record of any student will include no marks other than those cited in Part 2 of the resolution above (Pass or A-B-C); if a student fails in the judgment of an instructor to complete a course at a level corrseponding to at least C or Pass, the record will include no report of the student's having taken the course.

Toward the long-range goal of gradeless teaching, this statement of policy also implies that students will be helped to participate in evaluation by (1) exploring and understanding the aims of instruction and (2) judging their own growth in relation to goals they understand and accept.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AT THE SIXTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING, 1971

ON THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

BACKGROUND: An examination of the National Assessment of Educational Progress has occasioned great concern among members of the Commission on Composition as to the validity of basic assumptions of the Assessment and certain of its measuring instruments. Be it therefore

Resolved, That, in order to facilitate a more complete understanding of the National Assessment of Educational Progress by the membership of the National Council of Teachers of English, an immediate and thorough study of the National Assessment be carried out by appropriate members of the Council, and that their findings be given the widest possible distribution.

ON ACCOUNTABILITY

BACKGROUND: English teachers recognize their accountability to various groups—to students, to colleagues both within and without the discipline of English, to parents, to the local community which supports the schools, and to the wider communities beyond it. However, they reject the view that their goals and objectives can be stated only in quantifiably measurable terms, describing the behavior their students will display at the completion of instruction.

Moreover, just as important as the English teacher's accountability to his students, to his colleagues, and to the communities which have a responsible interest in his activities, is the accountability of each of these groups to him. Students are responsible for being active participants in the learning process. Parents are responsible for supplying a nurturing environment and for being valued colleagues in developing appropriate learning programs. Administators and others who provide the school climate are responsible for fostering the teaching process. The wider communities are responsible for providing financial, cultural, and social support. It is now part of the English teacher's obligation to clarify for himself, his students, his colleagues, and his several communities how he can be accountable. Be it therefore

Resolved, That the National Council of Teachers of English (1) describe the diverse and appropriate ways it is possible to know that students are learning,

and (2) recommend the most effective means of communicating this information as well as teachers' expectations about the responsibilities that students, parents, administrators, and the general public have to the educational program of the community.

ON THE USE OF STANDARDIZED TESTS

BACKGROUND: Standardized tests of achievement in English and reading have been subjects of growing controversy. Some test norms were established long ago or were based on populations that do not resemble the population being tested. The contents of many tests, moreover, are widely regarded as culturally biased or pertinent to outdated curricula. Moreover, many students who fail to demonstrate reading competency on standardized tests can and do read materials of interest to them.

Clearly other measures than standardized tests are needed to evaluate achievement in language arts skills. These include locally prepared tests of language arts skills, surveys of students' reading habits, and evaluations by teachers who work daily with students. Be it therefore

Resolved, That the National Council of Teachers of English urge local school districts, colleges, and state agencies

1. to reexamine standardized tests of English and reading in order to determine the appropriateness of their content to actual instructional goals and the appropriateness of the test norms to students;
2. to study problems in the use and interpretation of these tests; and
3. to consider carefully means other than standardized tests, including student self-evaluation, of assessing the language arts skills of students.

ON ITEMS TESTING COMPETENCE IN BLACK LITERATURE ON QUALIFYING AND CERTIFYING EXAMINATIONS

BACKGROUND: There has been a long and continuing neglect of African and Afro-American literature in the secondary schools. The recent inclusion of workshops in African and Afro-American literature by the National Council of Teachers of English is indicative of a new recognition and belief in presenting Black literature to secondary school students as a meaningful and important aspect of the study of literature. We can, therefore, no longer ignore the need for assessing the competence of teachers of literature in this area. Be it therefore

Resolved, That as long as tests are administered, items designed to test and examine competence in Black literature be included in all forthcoming editions and revisions of the literature sections of all teacher certification and recertification examinations, all English achievement tests, and the Graduate Record Examination. Be it further

Resolved, That these test items be included neither as options nor as supplementary items but as integral parts of these examinations.

ON PRINCIPLES OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS

BACKGROUND: If secondary school students are to become citizens trained in the democratic process, they must be given every opportunity to participate in the school and in the community with rights broadly analogous to those of adult citizens. The difference in the age range between secondary school and college students suggests the need for a greater degree of advice, counsel, and supervision by the faculty in the high schools than is necessary for the colleges or universities. From the standpoint of academic freedom and civil liberties, an essential problem in the secondary schools is how best to maintain and encourage freedom of expression and assembly, while simultaneously developing a sense of responsibility and good citizenship.

In exercising their responsibilities, faculty and administration should accept certain fundamental principles in order to prevent the use of administrative discretion to eliminate legitimate controversy and legitimate freedom. Be it therefore

Resolved, That the National Council of Teachers of English accept the following principles regarding Students' Rights:

1. Freedom implies the right to make mistakes and thus students must at times be permitted to act in ways which are unwise from an adult point of view so long as the consequences of their acts are not dangerous to life and property, and do not seriously disrupt the academic process.
2. Students in their schools should have the right to live under the principle of "rule by law" as opposed to "rule by personality," and, to protect this right, rules and regulations should be assented to by those who would be bound by them and should be in writing. (Students have the right to know the extent and limits of the faculty's authority and, therefore, the powers that are reserved for the students and the responsibilities that they should accept. Their rights should not be compromised by faculty members who while ostensibly acting as consultants or counselors are, in fact, exercising authority to censor student expression and inquiry.)
3. Deviation from the opinions and standards deemed desirable by the faculty is not *ipso facto* a danger to the educational process.

ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND: In many States teachers are being required to write and structure curriculum according to behavioral objectives before they are convinced of the appropriateness or necessity of so doing. Be it therefore

Resolved, That when members of the National Council of Teachers of English are put in the position to use or develop behavioral objectives, they assert their right to have satisfactory answers, supported by adequate evidence, to the following questions, among others:

1. Do changes of surface behavior constitute real changes in the language competence of learners?
2. Does performance on test items adequately measure cognitive and affective growth in the areas of literature and composition?
3. Does the concern to control short-term, easily measured objectives work against the attainment of basic long-range goals?
4. Are behavioral objectives relevant to and modifiable by students in planning curriculum?
5. Are behavioral objectives and their sequencing based on sound theory and research on the processes, competencies, and behaviors being developed?
6. Are behavioral objectives, the methods of their presentation, and the system of intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement likely to cause any unintentional learning, emotional strain, or other unplanned outcomes detrimental to the well-being of the learners? Be it further

Resolved, That concerned teachers ask: Who has the professional and moral right to predetermine and control what shall or shall not be the limits of acceptable behavior of young people? In short, do we help students grow or shape them to a mold?

ON INVOLVING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN DECISIONS REGARDING EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

BACKGROUND: A society which demands accountability of teachers must examine its priorities in relation to the education of its children and youth. Teachers cannot be held fully accountable for lack of learning in situations where classrooms are overcrowded, materials and supplies inadequate, curriculum imposed, and schools poorly supported and administered. Teachers are accountable to their profession, their communities, and the parents of their pupils, but most of all they are accountable to the young people they teach. Be it therefore

Resolved, That teachers and students, the parties most crucially involved in the learning process, be actively involved with state and local school administrators, school boards, community groups, and parents in making decisions regarding accountability structures and procedures.

SENSE-OF-THE-HOUSE MOTIONS PASSED BY THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AT THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, 1970

SENSE-OF-THE HOUSE MOTION 1

The NCTE preconvention Study Group #4 on The Systems Approach and Alternative Approaches to Curriculum Building urges adoption of the following sense-of-the-house motion:

In the meeting of the Association of State English and Reading Supervisors this problem was discussed, and the group agreed to endorse this idea.

Whereas, we recognize the possibility that systems approaches to education, including behavioral objectives, may prove to have merit after they have been carefully tested and evaluated in a variety of situations, we express grave concern about the widespread application of such approaches before adequate study has been made.

Therefore, we urge the Executive Committee to give its highest priority to appointing a responsible ad hoc commission to make a full-scale study of present application and misapplication of systems approaches to English and to make an independent assessment of the efficacy of such systems, providing educators, as quickly as possible, with practical advice on coping with demands to use and/or write curricula employing such systems.

SENSE-OF-THE HOUSE MOTION 4

That failing grades be eliminated as a permanent part of the record in all English and Language Arts courses at all educational levels.

SENSE-OF-THE HOUSE MOTION 5

That the NCTE Executive Committee appoint a committee to develop a position statement regarding grades for English courses at all educational levels, such statement to be presented as a resolution to the 1971 convention of NCTE at Las Vegas.

SENSE-OF-THE HOUSE MOTION 7

Because large ethnic minorities are often ignored in the preparation of teachers, and because NCTE has adopted a resolution urging the inclusion of Black literature in all testing required for certification of teachers, be it

moved *that*: items designed to test and examine competence in Chicano literature be included in all forthcoming editions and revisions of the literature section of all teacher certification and reclassification exams, all English achievement tests and the Graduate Record Examination in those areas of the country such as in California or the Southwest where the cultural contribution of the Chicano community has heretofore been ignored and that other minorities be recognized in other parts of the country where they constitute a sizable segment of the population.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
AT THE FIFTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING, 1969

ON BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

BACKGROUND: The Commission on the English Curriculum has recognized that the growing practice of proposing that behavioral objectives be defined for the language arts, and that these objectives be employed in testing, leads to a complex, demanding, and possibly educationally dangerous activity. Expert witnesses on the goals of English, in conference with the Commission, have echoed the Commission's concern that real damage to English instruction may result from definitions of English in the behavioral mode; and advise that the methods of measuring the attainment of behavioral objectives are still too imperfect to justify the extensive use of comprehensive behavioral definitions of English.

While the Commission advocates that all teachers be open-minded about possible alternatives for defining and structuring the English curriculum—including the use of behavioral objectives—at the same time it urges caution and accordingly presents the following resolution:

Resolved, That those who propose to employ behavioral objectives be urged to engage in a careful appraisal of the possible benefits and the present limitation of behavioral definitions of English with reference to the humanistic aims which have traditionally been valued in this discipline. And be it further

Resolved, That those in the profession who do undertake to write behavioral objectives (a) make specific plans to account for the total English curriculum; (b) make an intention to preserve (and, if need be, fight for) the retention of important humanistic goals of education; and (c) insist on these goals regardless of whether or not there exist instruments at the present time for measuring the desired changes in pupil behavior.

ON A REVIEW OF THE NAEP TEST IN LITERATURE

BACKGROUND: Five year ago a Committee for the National Assessment of Educational Progress was set up to appraise the state of education in the United States in a number of fields—including literature. To assist this enterprise, which operated through the Educational Testing Service, the following leaders of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Modern Language Association participated on an advisory panel: John Fisher, Erwin

121

Steinberg, Floyd Rinker, James Squire, Louise Rosenblatt, May Hill Arbuthnot, Nancy Larrick, Robert Freirer, James Reid, and Edward Gordon. This group, later aided by a number of well-qualified reviewers, defined the areas in which testing should be done, and assisted substantially in the preparation of appropriate instruments.

It now appears to some of those who have been most actively engaged in this project that the original intention of the advisory group is not well represented by the tests now being contemplated.

The limitation of the time allotted to the test in literature (160 minutes) admittedly makes impossible the adequate coverage of all the areas initially specified. The technical panel of NAEP finally responsible for choices from the large repertory of measures already approved has not, however, made selections according to a satisfactory pattern. Accordingly, it is desirable that a review of this committee's choices be made. Be it therefore

Resolved, That the National Council of Teachers of English urgently request that before final decisions are made and published the technical committee on literature of the NAEP now review the projected tests in literature with some or all the members of the original advisory committee; and that this advisory committee communicate its opinion concernng the proposed pattern and degree of coverage of these tests to the National Council for discussion.

A Resolution Passed by the
National Council of Teachers of English
at the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting, 1964

ON CONCERN FOR THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

BACKGROUND: Innovations in the organization of classes for instruction in elementary and secondary schools are in progress. Team teaching and other efforts to provide flexibility in grouping and organizing pupils for learning are subject to varied implementations, some of which may interfere with the teacher's fulfilling his responsibilities to the individual student. Be it therefore

Resolved, That the National Council of Teachers of English recommend that the organization of classes for teaching should provide:

1. Each pupil with some experience in small groups,
2. Time for a teacher to give a reasonably small group of pupils personal and sequential instruction,
3. Careful evaluation of the effects of individual and group instruction upon the educational development of each pupil.